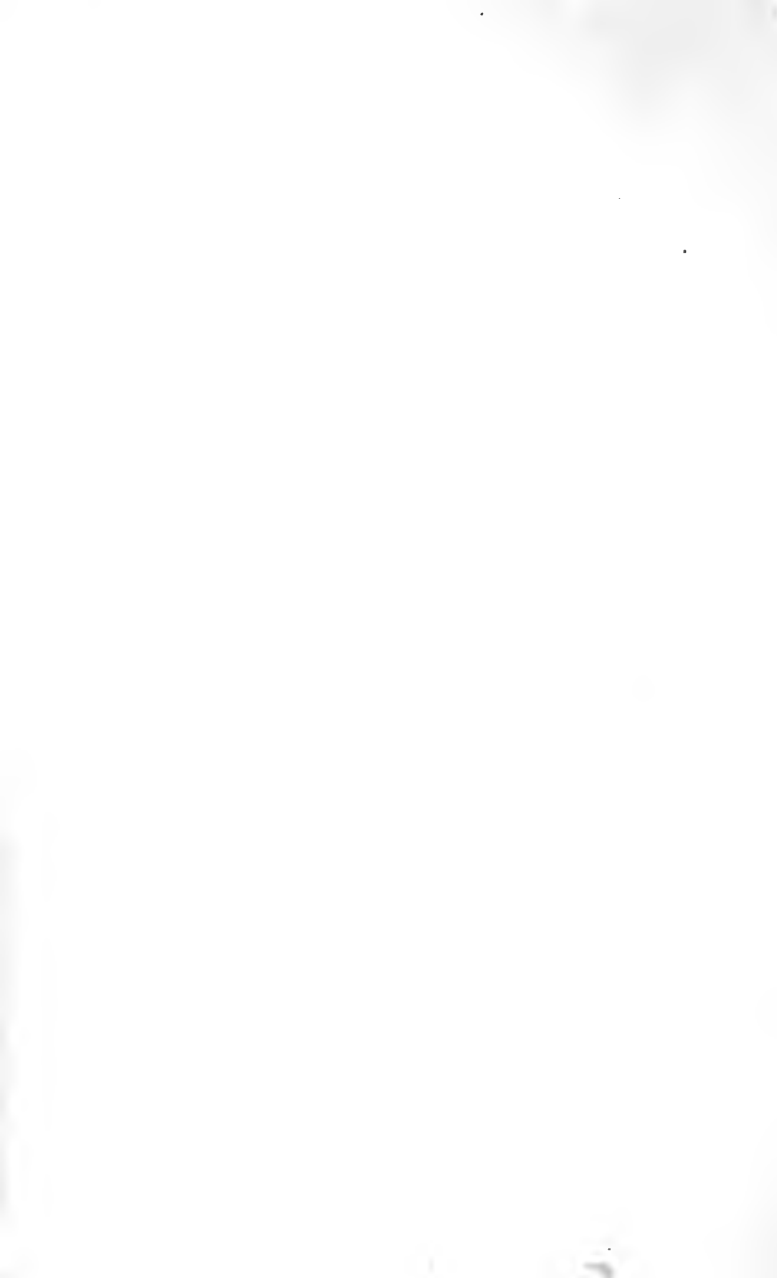






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TRADITIONS ABOUT ALDERSHOT.

(FARNHAM AND FARNBOROUGH.)

SECOND SERIES.

"Ἰδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,
"Ἰδμεν ὃ' ἔντ' ἐθέλωμεν, ἀληθέα μυθήσασθαι.
Hes. Dec. Gen. 27.

BY CHARLES STANLEY HERVÉ

(DE LA MORINIÈRE),

AUTHOR OF "LOVE AND PRIDE," "DON JUAN MARRIED,"
"SONGS FOR THE ARMY," &c., &c.

LONDON :

S. STRAKER & SONS,

"AVENUE" WORKS, BISHOPSGATE AVENUE, E.C.

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PREFACE.

THOSE who have read my first series of "Traditions about Aldershot," published fourteen years ago, will perfectly understand that it has been found necessary in this, a second series, to pursue the same course as before, namely, to employ *real* names, both of persons and places, *only* when such could be done without touching the sensibilities of the present generation belonging to the localities. And now a few words to the general public.

So little back as fifty years ago Aldershot parish and village numbered only three hundred and fifty souls. Its manor-house (now in the occupation of Captain Newcome, J.P.) and three or four moderate homesteads were the only domiciles above the rank of very humble cottages, and the Red Lion Tavern was the only place of public entertainment.

Twenty-six years ago all became changed, as if by magic. "Harlequin's wand" passed over the place, and transformed it from a wilderness of gorse and furze into a populous and thriving community. A Government military camp sprang up; palatial barracks for the soldiers, churches, mission halls, hotels, theatres, music halls, streets of capacious shops, private residences, large commercial establishments, gas and water companies, with all the concomitants of civilian prosperity—all uprose within a brief space, and the once obscure village of Aldershot, well paved, drained and lighted, numbers hard upon twelve thousand inhabitants, who, with the twelve thousand troops generally located in the camp, form a community of very respectable importance, *seeing that fifty years ago Aldershot was without even so much as a name in some of the county maps.*

What Aldershot may be twenty-five years hence no prophet may tell, but it must be for good, and it is a noteworthy circumstance that, obscure as was the locality, it was yet full of

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romantic traditions, some of which are even more curious than those already presented to notice, especially a few connected with the Tichborne family, the Vernon family, and that of the late William Cobbett, and in relation to some of the present series I take the opportunity to acknowledge my obligations to an old gentleman named Piper, late of Farnham, and formerly a clerk in the banking firm of Messrs. Knight, to whose antiquarian research I am indebted for the curious semi-historical fact recorded in the tale of "The Fox and Hounds," which even yet "stands in evidence," a brick-and-mortar relic of three hundred years' standing, to confront the wayfarer on the Lower Farnham Road, linking old memories, thence to the old parish church of Aldershot itself, as told by the chronicler.

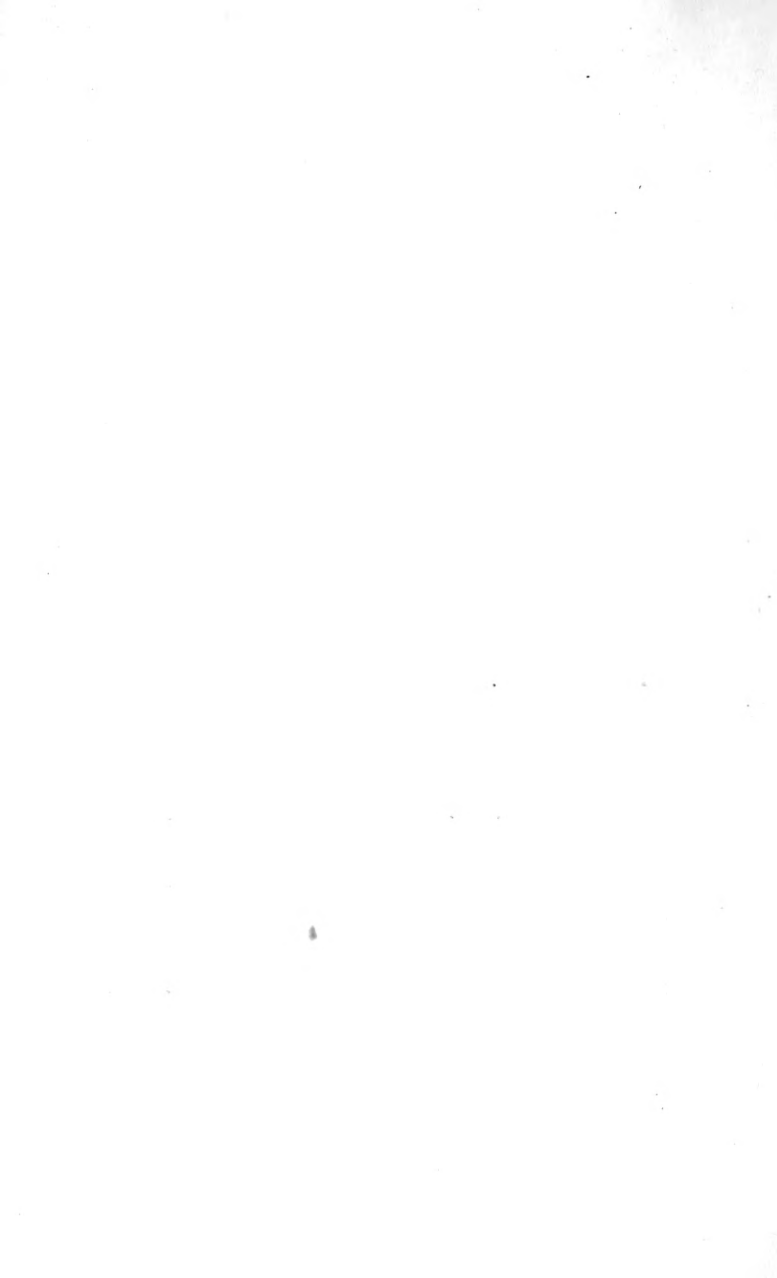
In the hope that this present series of "Traditions" may find as much favour as the last, I make my bow and say "Farewell."

C. S. HERVÉ.

Flagstaff Villa, Grosvenor Road, Aldershot,
May 3, 1881.

CONTENTS.

	Page
THE LOVE-STONE	I
FOX AND HOUNDS	47
THE TRADESMAN'S DAUGHTER	75
HIS WHISKERS; OR, THE BARBER-FIEND	119
THE DEATH-ROSE	141
THE TINKER'S LEGACY	150
THE HEIR-IN-TAIL	170
LEGENDS OF SAINTS AND SINNERS	215
SELECTIONS FROM THE VERSIFIED PORTION OF A SACRED ORATORIO—ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST	311



THE LOVE-STONE.

“There be precious stones which have a sympathy with human suffering and passions, as was well known to the ancients. Worn as amulets, they often acted as love spells, particularly the opal, which is accredited as an antidote to malice and hatred, growing bright with the smile of welcome on approach of a loved object, and waxing dim, as with tears, on the loved one’s departure. It is even said to become shattered under the downfall of rain at harvest time.”

EUSEBIUS VAN DER BEKE, on Lapidary Work
(Translated from the Dutch).

THE LOVE-STONE.

CHAPTER I.

LONG, long ago, before the village of Aldershot had made its mark upon the county map, otherwise than as a parish liable to poor-rates and king's taxes (for it was before the time of a Lady Sovereign), even so long ago as when Lord High-Admiral Clarence, the Sailor King, steered the bark of Madame Britannia, who just then ruled the waves not very straight, insomuch as the billows of turbulence ran high, and the rocks of discontent were laid bare, not only round the "tight little island" itself, but in the far East, where "John Company" held sway, driving us islanders into a loud cry for political reform, and our Indian Empire into a terrible fight for supremacy, with bold Sir Charles Napier for its impending hero and Scinde for an appanage. So long then ago as about the year 1830, and while yet only some three or four moderate-sized houses stood within hail of the parish church, a few very humble cottages looked upon the enclosed piece of land now called Aldershot Green, they being the property—freehold or leasehold, it matters little which—of a man named Pharo, who let those same cottages to whosoever would rent them for the sum of eighteen-pence each weekly, not

being at all particular as to who occupied them so they paid him his dues.

It was in the best one of these dwellings that a somewhat mysterious couple had been living for seven months, greatly exciting the wonder and curiosity of the few neighbours who abode near them—"Jones" was the name by which they were known—the man being a comely young fellow enough about four-and-twenty years of age, and his wife, an equally comely woman, whose years might have numbered twenty-two, certainly not more, neither of them seeming to care for associating with their neighbours, and both being without occupation, so far as appearances went.

The occupants of the cottages nearest to this singular couple were agricultural labourers, very poor indeed, earning a wage of nine shillings only by the week ; while the next two of their neighbours, a trifle further off, were scarcely more richly endowed, the one as a vendor of "small stuff," the other as a cobbler "on half-pay," as he called himself, meaning thereby that he "cobbled" shoes or boots for only one-half the price his work was entitled to, which might be true or false according to the judgment of such as paid. One, only one other neighbour dwelt within sight of Mr. and Mrs. Jones who, by reason of propinquity, had any right at all to exercise curiosity touching the ways and means of such as dwelt within the small radius of his circle—this was one Timothy Weazel, an army pensioner, who, by reason of his being lame of one leg, blind of one eye, and deaf as a post, was judged fit to enact the part of parish

constable, and was accordingly sworn in as such, at a salary of "nothing a-year," payable quarterly, but with perquisites, which sometimes amounted to the sum of two shillings within the twelve months, resulting from the capture of a stray vagrant or so, who might have had the audacity to steal a farthing turnip or to sleep under a hedge without paying for his lodging.

Of these few neighbours who thought it worth while to attempt solving the mystery of their more fortunate, or at least more idle, co-parishioner, this Timothy Weazel was certainly the most adventurous one; partly because he had plenty of time on his hands, and partly because, being in the service of his Majesty, it was his bounden duty to find out if treason was being hatched out within his realm of observation.

Had Mr. and Mrs. Jones followed any ostensible mode for obtaining a living, had the man been a carpenter, a mason, or a labourer of any kind, and the woman gone out on service, no remark would have been made; but the man did nothing except sleep all day, while others were at work, and ramble about all night, while others were in bed: the woman doing even less than this, for she neither slept by day nor walked forth at all, except once or so, at brief intervals, when she set forth wearing a shawl of dazzling colours and inestimable worth—such as no poor woman had a right to possess—and made her way through Batchet Lea to Farnham, from whence she returned, bearing such few necessaries as could not be purchased nearer.

It was not known, therefore, whether Mr. and Mrs.

Jones were living upon an income of their own or not. Be this, however, as it might, it was quite certain that they lived well, even upon the fat of the land ; for upon the ornamental ash-heap which decorated the front of the little cottage range were found the bones of chickens and other fowl—not always picked so cleanly as might have been had the pickers been very poor. Broken bottles also were discovered, bottles which had held spirits, or even wine, such as poor people could never have indulged in ; and more than all this, worse than all these, bones of a most peculiar kind were discovered buried beneath the leaves of cabbages and other vegetables—bones which seemed to have been concealed for a purpose—bones of ribs, small ribs, such as might have appertained to—what ?—something larger than a barn door fowl, or even a turkey ; bones which—horrible to suppose—might have belonged to some animal of no ordinary kind, even to a small human being—a baby ! The supposition was fearful to contemplate, and yet Timothy Weazel did contemplate it, and even whispered it, too, as he poked his walking stick into the heap of cinders and vegetable refuse which formed an unsightly mound in front of the cottage inhabited by the Joneses.

There was no magistrate residing in the manor house, now so honourably occupied by Captain Newcome, or Timothy Weazel would certainly have laid an information touching this mystery. As it was, he was fain to poke and fish about for more evidence, casting around his one eye, hobbling on his lame leg, assisted by a stick, and enquiring of the poor labourers' wives for scraps of

knowledge which might help him on. But none, or next to none, could he obtain, as the only instance in which the village gossips could find access to Mrs. Jones was at the time when she made her daily visit to the one single well, at the back of the cottages, which served for all; and at such time Mrs. Jones uttered no words except "good morning," and that only in a tone of voice which implied utter contempt for the speakers.

It must not be supposed, however, that curiosity found no relief in framing for itself an occupation for Mr. Jones—for, if that personage was known to be absent most nights from his home, he was seen to return very early in the morning with pockets in his capacious velveteen coat bulging out suspiciously; traces of blood had even been noticed in his wake by Timothy Weazel—not very abundant traces—little spots only—some of which he had taken care to sop up with a morsel of white blotting-paper, bought in Farnham for the purpose. This fact, coupled with the other fact of small rib bones, went far to make Timothy Weazel have terrible apprehensions that Mr. Jones was a body-snatcher, if not absolutely a cannibal. He had read of vampires, too, in some German story books lent him by the house-keeper at the manor, and so terribly did the complication of horrible thoughts affect him that he could obtain no sleep of nights without the aid of a stiff glass of grog, which he could but ill afford.

It may be surmised from the foregoing that Timothy Weazel was a trifle weak of intellect, and such was certainly true to some extent, for the silver medal which

a blazing seacoal fire in that one of the two rooms which constituted their parlour, kitchen and all, about the hour of mid-day, with a dense fog blurring the struggling light outside, whereby they had found it necessary to light a couple of miserable candles, known as "dips."

Mr. Jones, or "Tommy," as his wife called him, was a good-looking man, tall, well formed, and evidently very strong, his shoulders being a trifle disproportionately wide for his height, which touched upon six feet. He was very much tanned in the face, owing to habitual exposure to the weather, all but his forehead, which was very fair, a circumstance due to its being almost always covered with a sealskin cap, not of that peculiar kind known to modern fashion, but of that old-world kind popular fifty years ago, when the prevailing colour was that of "vandyke brown," and its texture what might be termed "lumpy." Perhaps the most noticeable feature about Thomas Jones was his hair, of light auburn, short, crisp, and curly, such as is generally represented in statuary as pertaining to the athletes of the arena; for the rest, his features were good, if a little sensuous, all except his eyes, which were low, sunk, and shifty. He was dressed, or rather half-dressed, in an open waistcoat of "cow-skin," a long and loose velveteen coat—much weather-stained—a pair of corduroy unmentionables, loose at the knee, and stockings of dark brown worsted, his feet being shoeless.

Mrs. Jones, his "vis-a-vis" at the table, was as comely as her husband, if not more so, being very plump, both in face and figure, with a pair of dark eyes, over-arched by

singularly well-curved brows, an aquiline nose, a somewhat rounded chin, and a mouth so beautiful to look upon, at a glance, that the temptation to kiss it was very great indeed until that mouth, by becoming opened, displayed a set of teeth so large, so dazzlingly white, and so formidably regular, that they did not seem natural, but the artificial exhibit of a manufacturing dentist, placed there by way of advertisement, and yet they were real, thirty-two in number, according to Nature's own pattern.

It may seem, on description, that a very extra good set of teeth could by no means be a deformity, and yet the exhibition of those very incisors and molars did strike the beholder with unpleasant surprise—repelling, in fact, any gazer whom the beautiful lips might tempt into presuming with a kiss, to retreat, “*prestissimo*,” for fear of a bite, instead of an answering caress. Apart from this defect, Mrs. Jones was decidedly a lovable woman, fair, inclined to plumpness, and with a head of hair glossy and abundant, falling upon her sufficiently uncovered bosom in rippling volume, graceful beyond the reach of art.

In point of dress Mrs. Jones was decidedly deficient—for the nonce, at least—for she was both stayless and gownless, wearing no lower garment than a petticoat of some dark woollen material, and a shawl thrown carelessly over her shoulders—very probably that identical shawl which her envious female neighbours coveted while they disparaged, for it was of Indian fabric, rich in colour, thick in texture, and worth, at the very least,

from twenty to thirty pounds. No shoes covered her plump feet, but her stockings were of silk. This pair—the man and wife—were seated, as before told, at their breakfast, the table whereon which was displayed being worth description for the extreme singularity of its appointments; for although the table itself was of the commonest material, it was covered by a damask cloth of the finest texture, and set out with a service, or part service, of costly china ware, two cups, several plates, and a couple of dishes, evidently the finest Worcester or Derby could produce, while the tea-pot and milk ewer were of the best Sheffield plated. Within the tea-pot, or rather from out it, steamed the fragrant odour of expensive tea, such as could not have been purchased for less than seven shillings the pound, and on one of the dishes the remains of a fine hare displayed ribs of a size an quality such as might well have deceived Mr. Timothy Weazel in mistaking them for those of a young child. Upon the other dish a well-browned pheasant, as yet untouched by knife or fork, lay temptingly in view—although, of course, cold—serving to display, as it were, a superfluity of riches in the eating line of business, as well as to offer a strange contrast to the otherwise poverty-stricken surroundings of the room itself, consisting of only three Windsor chairs, a small display of cooking materials, and such domestic utensils as were indispensable, if it be excepted that the walls of the room were decorated with sundry appurtenances appertaining to Mr. Jones's somewhat questionable trade, such as a gun or two, sundry belts and pouches, some fishing tackle, a

few nets used to ensnare birds, and several bags of capacious make, all of which articles were either hung upon nails and pegs, or otherwise secured on shelves, and covered with material of various kinds. Opening from this dwelling-room might be seen the apartment devoted to slumber, and even in this might be noted the same strange contrast of comparative wealth and poverty, for while the bedstead was of painted wood only, the bed itself seemed to consist of two feather beds, heaped one over the other above a mattress, which served to pile up the whole so high that a set of bed steps was necessary in order to climb up to the bed itself, bed linen and counterpane being all of a quality to match, although whatever else the room itself contained was of the cheapest and humblest, needing no description at all.

Mr. and Mrs. Jones had finished their breakfast—the lady sitting cross-legged, in an unladylike way, before the fire, which she occasionally poked with a vicious air, as if in a bad temper—the gentleman (if he may be called so) reading an old number of the *Times* newspaper, covered with dirt and grease, as though it had passed through many hands before reaching those of the present reader. Mr. Jones had been thus employed in silence for a considerable time, when suddenly he uttered an exclamation, which aroused Mrs. Jones from her abstraction.

“What is it, Tommy?” exclaimed Mrs. Jones.

“Something that will bother you, as it bothers me,” replied Mr. Jones.

“I don’t care to be more bothered than I am now,

living in this poking hole, with no one to associate. What is it, though ? ”

“ Something I can’t make out. Your old mistress is married.”

“ What old mistress ? Lady Mary ? ”

“ The Dowager ? No. Young Miss Mabel. Your late mistress, if you like that term better.”

“ My late mistress ! Why, you know she was married, in spite of the old Dowager’s teeth, to her lover, the captain, twelve months ago. Was I not her bridesmaid on the sly ? and did she not give us these very things ? ”

“ Yes, you were her bridesmaid, and got fifty pounds for that job ; but for all that she is married again, and to that same captain ; here it is in black and white, listen—”

Hereupon Thomas Jones read from the newspaper :—
“ ‘ Married, at the parish church of Dipple-on-the-Ware, Captain Henry Turnbull, of the Honble. East India Company’s Service, to Miss Mabel Drinkwater, youngest daughter of the late Sir Thomas Drinkwater, of Diply Hall, Northumberland.’ There ! ”

“ What on earth can it mean ? Married a second time ! Re-married ! and to the same man—her own proper husband ! What is the date ? ”

“ No date at all ; there is the mystery ; it does not say when ; either a few days ago, or twelve months ; it is strange, very.”

“ Let me see the paper.”

Whereupon Mr. Jones handed over the newspaper to his wife, who, after conning the announcement over and over again, flung down the paper, saying, “ There is some

meaning in this—some stratagem to blind the old lady, who, being only stepmother to the two girls, Mabel and Elizabeth, had a mortal hatred of both, for reasons I never could find out.”

“Was it about money matters?”

“Partly, but not entirely. She hated the two girls—Miss Elizabeth, the eldest, who married during her father’s lifetime, and died in childbirth, and Miss Mabel, too; partly because she held the control of her fortune till she should be twenty-one, and partly because she hated the Turnbull family in mass.”

“Why?”

“General Turnbull, the father, had been her lover, and refused her thirty years ago; or, to make the matter clearer, it is whispered that she courted the gentleman in such a barefaced manner that he not only rejected her love, but made her ridiculous by telling tales.”

“Very ungentlemanly.”

“Perhaps so, but that is the tale. It is even said that she only married Sir Thomas Drinkwater in order to spit her spite on the General’s two sons, especially the one who was courting Miss Mabel.”

“A vicious old beldame. What an ass Sir Thomas was to marry her, with his two daughters both grown up, and a son.”

“Just so; but we only guess at the mystery as yet. I wish I knew where to address a letter to Mrs. Captain Turnbull.”

“She may write to you, perhaps. She knows your address.”

"She knows I am here, and under our assumed name, as I wrote to her seven months ago when we had occasion to play at hide-and-seek, taking the name of Jones as a blind."

"Drop that, Mary. Let no whisper of our real name be echoed about, lest harm befall us. But hark ! there is a knock—a postman's knock, too, by the living Jingo !"

A knock there certainly was, and very much like a postman's knock, only it had been made with the end of a stout walking cane in place of the usual door knocker, which was conspicuously absent.

On opening the door, Mr. Jones found himself confronted by an attenuated slip of mortality in the shape of one Tom Bowler, the postman of Ash district, whose exceedingly thin legs and scarcely thicker body told only too truly that he had much walking to do for very little pay. He was accompanied also by Timothy Weazel, to whom there had been told the wonderful news of "a letter for the Joneses."

"Mrs. Mary Jones," exclaimed the postman, "postage paid."

In all probability Timothy Weazel had hoped, if not expected, to catch a glimpse of the interior of the cottage, but in this he was disappointed, for Mr. Jones no sooner took hold of the letter than he slammed the door, leaving both his visitors out in the cold, greatly to their sorrow.

"For you, Molly, my dear. Shall I open it ?"

"At your peril, Tommy Jones ; give it me."

Thus saying, but not in angry mood, Mrs. Jones snatched the letter, and after reading it twice, with here and there an exclamation of surprise, she handed it over to her husband, saying,

“It is very much as I suspected, the old Dowager, her step-mother, has given an unwilling consent to her marriage at last, and the poor thing has had to get up a sham wedding in order to conceal the real one of twelve months ago—read for yourself.”

This being what Mr. Jones read :

MY DEAR MARY TROLLOPE (otherwise Jones),—

I write to you in great trouble. My dear husband is ordered off to India in hot haste on account of the war, and I must accompany him, but a circumstance which you may guess at stands in the way—I *am about to become a mother*, and dare not allow my dowager step-mother to guess this fact, or she will perceive at once the fraud which we, INCLUDING YOURSELF, have played upon her by the secret marriage of twelve months ago, in which case she would have the power to alienate the fortune left me by my father under his strange will.

You must now be informed that, for the last three months, I have been on a visit to the only friend who, besides yourself, knows my secret, and through whose kind offices I mainly owe the consent, reluctantly extracted, for my marriage, but who, most unfortunately, is also compelled to leave England with her husband for the same reason as I and mine must leave.

Up to this moment I have been able to keep my secret from prying eyes, but cannot meet those of my step-mother, nor, in fact, those of any other very dear observant friends. A little clever arrangement has enabled me to get the notice of my marriage announced in the *Times* without a date attached, although all other particulars were correct—it is merely UNDATED—thereby giving the old lady, as well as some others, to believe the marriage only seven days old.

One other little arrangement leaves me free to depart so suddenly that all leave-taking may be dispensed with, thus all would be well but for one terrible difficulty—I *must give birth to my child unknown to all the world except yourself*, and you must help me for the sake of old times.

My plan, therefore, is this : myself and husband will reach the Bush Hotel, Farnham, by post-carriage under an assumed name on the day you receive this *if all goes well*. I must then get conveyed to your place of residence and trust to your good offices for the rest, hoping that my trouble may be got well over in time to embark with my husband in the transport ship, which is even now being made ready at Portsmouth. Be you once again my friend in this my sorest trouble, and I will requite your kindness ever more. Go or send to Farnham, at the Bush Hotel, and ask for Mr. and Mrs. Smith, all further details when we meet.

Your affectionate friend,

MABEL TURNBULL.

“A precious mess we are in then,” exclaimed Tom Jones. “Is there nothing else, women generally add a postscript?”

“No—yes, see, here is a small folded paper, which I did not perceive at first—and, ah, containing a bank note !”

“For how much—give it me?”

Whereupon Mary Jones gave the enclosure, which proved to be a note for ten pounds, with a scrap of writing to the effect that no expense was to be spared in making arrangements for the expected issue.

“What the devil shall we do?” interrogated Jones.

“Why, the best we can, of course.”

“We have but these two rooms and these common traps of furniture, nothing fit for a lady and gentleman.”

“Who will, perhaps, pass themselves off as Jack and Jill, being glad to put up with anything. Our bed, at least, is a good one, and we have our plated tea-pot, with china ware, her gift, and—”

“The devil a stick of furniture to match.”

“That ten pound note will furnish all the rest.”

“Only, how shall we get anything in time. Besides putting our neighbours up to more than we wish them to know, there’s that meddling fool, the village constable, will be smelling a rat.”

“Let him catch one then, and eat it afterwards. Tommy, you’re half a fool. All we have to do is to keep quiet. My old mistress and her husband will put up with anything for secrecy. Go to Farnham at once, bring back half a dozen of good wine, some brandy, a couple of fowls, and a few other matters, leaving all else to me.”

“How about the doctor?”

“I forgot that. Ah! The surgeon at Ash who plaistered your head, which the keeper at Farnham cracked for you.”

“And for which I owe him yet, and will pay him.”

“Never mind that. He, the doctor, must be called in, if needful. But hark! What noise is that? A carriage?”

The sound of wheels grinding through the slush outside, and over the ash heap, immediately caused Jones to open the door, before which stood a pair-horse chaise, one of once famed “yellows,” drawn by a tolerable couple of horses, and driven by a post “boy” ætat 70 years.

Few words were spoken ; all was seen at a glance ; the two occupants of the vehicle were surely Captain and Mrs. Turnbull ; the gentleman wearing a palpable disguise, but not too shabby to challenge attention ; the lady also wearing an extremely plain dress, shawl, and bonnet ; the luggage pertaining to the two being just such a modest trunk as might have been purchased for half-a-dozen shillings.

Almost before the post-boy (ætat 70) could receive his fee and dismissal, all of the immediate neighbours, consisting of females only, were congregated in front of the cottage, wonderstruck at sight of the vehicle, the like of which no one of them had, possibly, ever seen before ; and while yet the equipage was moving off, Timothy Weazel hobbled up, by the aid of his stick, no one of the small congregate having caught a glimpse of the two visitors, who were only too glad to evade remark.

CHAPTER III.

CAPTAIN TURNBULL was a fine, soldier-like man, a trifle over the middle height, his face bronzed by the climate of India, in which part of the globe he had passed eight years, having taken a leave of nearly two years, upon "urgent private business," his full period of time being at an end. Mrs. Turnbull, his wife, was a tall, blue-eyed, flaxen-haired, and very graceful woman ; but looked extremely delicate, even beyond the degree warranted by

her peculiar state of nigh approach to travail. She no sooner found herself within reach of female aid than she signed to Mary Jones, who lost no time in withdrawing her to the bedroom, leaving the Captain to arrange matters with Jones himself.

"Is this all the accommodation you can afford?" Captain Turnbull ejaculated, looking around him in absolute dismay.

"It is all, sir," replied Jones. "Very humble, as you see. I am afraid your lady over-rated our means. Had we received notice, something better might have been done, but we only received the letter this very morning."

"I could have wished things had been different," again spoke the Captain, looking round him with a dissatisfied air. "But perhaps it is as well—have you better sleeping accommodation than this room gives promise for?"

"Yes, sir—two feather beds, one over the other, a fireplace in the room, and all else to fit. My wife has taken care of that."

"Then never mind the rest. A doctor and a nurse are both to be got at."

"A doctor certainly, and a nurse perhaps."

"Your wife could possibly supply the latter help; as regards myself, I can make shift anyhow and anywhere. Have you any wine?"

"No, sir. We have only just received notice of your arrival."

There is no need to report any further conversation on this point. Mr. Tom Jones was immediately despatched

to Farnham for supplies ; meanwhile Mary Jones and Mrs. Turnbull settled matters to their own satisfaction, the upshot being that Jones himself should vacate the premises, and that Captain Turnbull should hire a sleeping-room at the cottage of the parish clerk, who lived in Church-lane, no one else in the neighbouring cottages having a decent bed to offer.

This arrangement having been settled, Jones departed on his errand and the Captain began to plan the somewhat peculiar campaign which lay before him, and in which he felt the difficulties which any general of prudent forethought would have contemplated with even reasonable fear. What he had most to dread was that his wife's confinement would not take place in time to afford her recovery within the period which must elapse before the transport ship would be ready to sail. He was also compelled to leave his wife for two days, at all events, in her present state of uncertainty, while he himself took measures for arranging her departure without being compelled to face scrutinising eyes.

With this intention he commended his wife to the charge of her former servant, and took his departure to Portsmouth at once.

CHAPTER IV.

IT is now imperative to account for the strange situation in which an educated lady found herself placed, through her own imprudence. Miss Mabel Drinkwater,

the youngest child of a deceased father, and step-daughter of a vindictive woman, had been prevailed on to marry her lover, the son of a man who had scorned and rejected the love of that same vindictive woman—her step-mother—thirty years before the present time. The marriage of Captain Turnbull and Mabel Drinkwater had been private, in the hope that it could be so kept until the lady was twenty-one years of age, when she could claim her fortune at once, but until which time her step-mother could not only retain its control, but could alienate it entirely and for ever, provided the young lady should marry without her consent.

The secret of the marriage had been well kept, through the fact that, after the first three or four months of married life, the young lady had lived apart from her step-mother at the residence of a confidential friend, until the war in India summoned both husbands to the East, when circumstances compelled recourse to further artifice. What that artifice was need not be told, but it was sufficient to secure the assent of the Dowager Lady Drinkwater to a marriage between Captain Turnbull and Mabel—grudgingly given, it is true, and only on condition that her fortune of ten thousand pounds should not be paid over till the young lady was fully of age, leaving the position thus: If it should be discovered that a marriage had actually taken place before permission was accorded, the Dowager Lady Drinkwater could withhold her fortune altogether, if she so pleased.

Captain Turnbull's plan, therefore, was to make it appear that his marriage was the result of permission just

given, and not a fact of earlier date—a matter which rendered it impèrative that his wife should not be too closely observed previous to her actual departure. He had even arranged for all to proceed, as designed, when the present “*contretemps*” arrived, leaving but one extreme difficulty yet to meet—Lady Drinkwater *insisted* on taking farewell of her step-daughter at the last moment of departure, and this difficulty had to be faced.

Shortly after the Captain’s departure, Jones came back from Farnham with the necessary supplies, and, at his wife’s order, took up his temporary residence at the “Red Lion” Inn, hard by, where he was well content to stay; and Mrs. Captain Turnbull made herself as comfortable as she could with her confidante, Mary Jones, after a manner well known to the gentler sex, but mysteriously dark to the rougher portion of humanity.

The two sate by the fireside, more like companions than mistress and maid; for complicity in deceit had partially broken down the barriers of rank between them. It was thus that in the course of conversation, Mary Jones, glancing, as is common among her sex, at the third finger of Mrs. Captain Turnbull’s left hand, took notice of a somewhat remarkable ring which that lady wore as a guard to her wedding ring. This ring, of somewhat thick gold, rather clumsy in its make, contained one single stone, of very curious appearance; it was not at all a handsome stone, almost the reverse in fact, somewhat between an indifferent opal and the stone known as a “cat’s eye,” neither bright nor dull, neither transparent nor opaque.

"That is a very curious ring you wear as a guard," exclaimed Mary Jones.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Captain Turnbull, "it is very curious—more so than I can well describe. It was given to my husband's father many years ago by a Fakir, and is one of two only which were said to have been stolen from the Taj Mahal."

"It is not pretty."

"You are right—it is not pretty; but it either possesses, or we fancy it possesses, a singular virtue—that of looking bright when a loved object is near, and growing dull when that loved object is distant. We call it a 'LOVE-STONE.'"

"Is it, then, a charm?"

"It would have been thought so in old times. My husband gave it to me as a love token. It was worn by his own mother, and is never to pass out of my possession except as a heirloom. I may not take it off, but you can look at it. See, it is now dull, because my husband is far off. Had he been near, it would have looked much brighter."

"A fancy, of course—merely a fancy."

"Perhaps, and yet I like to believe it a fact, a kind of sympathetic link between us as husband and wife; but enough of this, let us converse on some other subject."

With this the conversation ended, so far as concerns this narrative, and for the whole of that day, and the next beyond, nothing transpired of importance, but on the following day something did transpire, for it was found necessary to send for the surgeon from Ash, who came

at the summons of Jones, as quickly as possible—not, however, before Mrs. Turnbull, in almost frantic joy, told her companion that the Captain was on his way back ; “for see,” she exclaimed, “my ring is becoming bright. He is near—he is near !”

Strange to tell, this proved the fact. Captain Turnbull had left Portsmouth that very morning, and even while his footsteps neared the door of the cottage, where already appeared the doctor’s carriage, he knew that he had become a father, and, as he hoped, a happy one ; but of that—to come.

As it does not concern the intents of our story to record the anxieties of alternate hope and fear attendant upon an event of this kind, or the raptures of a mother in the first happiness of her maternity, with the pride and joy of a father on such occasion, it is only necessary to state that the child was a girl, that the mother was pronounced “as well as could be expected,” and that no misfortune of any kind threw a cloud over the aspect of affairs until the sixth day after this joyful event, when the very worst possible misfortune took place—the Captain’s ship was ordered off within four-and-twenty hours. The Dowager Lady Drinkwater was at Portsmouth awaiting the arrival of her step-daughter, and the Captain, with his wife, must appear together, or the plot would be discovered ; for, as a confidential friend intimated, *some kind of suspicion had already found its way into the Dowager Lady’s mind.*

Here was a difficulty to be faced. Either Mrs. Turnbull must go on board in her precarious state, or be

left behind. This last alternative the poor wife utterly rejected, while the surgeon put his veto on the former alternative ; and then, as regarded the child ? It could perhaps be smuggled on board in the arms of some other female passenger ! These and other considerations had to be discussed in brief time, Mrs. Turnbull declaring that go she would, be the risk what it might ; while her husband was for making a clean breast of it, and acknowledging all to the Dowager, when Mary Jones made a proposition. If Mrs. Turnbull positively determined on going with her husband at all risks, she, Mary Jones, would take charge of the child for twelve months, and then send it over to India in care of a competent nurse, at the Captain's decision.

This was a terrible trial to the poor mother, but yet appeared the most sensible plan to be adopted. Mrs. Turnbull could surely trust her old and attached servant, and, by so doing, could avoid all further difficulties.

After a severe mental contest, this plan was agreed upon, it being arranged that the Joneses, man and wife, should remove to some better locality at the earliest time, intercommunication being arranged through a London banker, who would supply money, to the extent of fifty pounds, until further orders came from India, whither the Captain and his wife were bound.

There was no time for further arrangements, not even for baptising the child. Mary Jones was to get the infant christened, after its mother "Mabel," and with this proviso the sadly troubled parents took a long

embrace of their infant, scarce daring to contemplate either its future or their own.

Seven days after their first arrival at Aldershot, the afflicted couple arrived at Portsmouth, the poor mother very feeble, but keeping up appearances sufficiently well to disarm her step-mother of any suspicion she might have entertained. A cold embrace followed, and in an hour the whole detachment of officers, wives, and a few private soldiers departed for their destination, Mary Jones being left in charge of the infant all by herself, her husband having somewhat strangely absented himself for three whole days, giving no reason for so unusual an occurrence.

CHAPTER V.

ON the evening of the fourth day following this event, a very singular occurrence took place at the Farnham Workhouse. It was eight o'clock on a very dark night, when a loud ring was heard at the outer gate, and was somewhat slowly attended to by the official appointed for such service. On opening the door the surly janitor observed no one in wait.

With a deep curse he was about to close the door, when a muffled cry arrested his attention, and on turning his ear towards the bell-handle he found hanging to it a basket, from which issued the cries or sound he had

noticed. A suspicion seized him at once—it was the cry of a child—and on taking down the basket, which was of an ordinary kind, such as was used in marketing by persons of the lower sort, he found, carefully wrapped up, an infant about two weeks old, crying out lustily for its appointed food.

“Devil take the brat” was the official’s first exclamation, “I suppose I must take it in, or be hauled over the coals if I leave it to freeze this bitter cold night.”

Thus saying, the porter carried his little burthen to the master, who, with a benediction scarcely more polite than that of his underling, consigned the “little stranger,” by no means a welcome one, to the matron of the establishment, who happened at that moment to be in the infirmary upon the unpleasant duty of watching the last moments of a dying female pauper; this poor woman, a “casual” and nameless, had only a few nights before given birth to a girl child, and was then *in extremis*, with the chaplain of the workhouse endeavouring to ascertain who she was, as also, it is to be hoped, giving her Christian consolation on her death-bed. The infirmary was a long room, having in it somewhere about a dozen beds, fourteen inches apart only, six on each side, with three feet of space down the middle; at the far end was a large fireplace, something like a kitchen range, with several saucepans and other culinary utensils, some of them in use; there was a stifling atmosphere in the place, every window being closed and no ventilation whatsoever. All the beds seemed occupied, and a few moans, with half-suppressed cries, gave token of

suffering among the patients, all of whom were, of course, women.

In addition to these, three other females were present, two of them pauper nurses, and the third, a stout and important looking individual, was the matron of the workhouse, evidently much "put about" that one poor sufferer, in the bed nearest to the fireplace, was somewhat too long about dying.

Sitting close to the fireplace was a tall, slight gentleman, whose long black coat, square cut waistcoat, and white neckcloth pronounced him the clergyman; but, if such, he was an extremely unsympathising one, for although the poor sufferer close by him was evidently at death's door, he made no effort to administer consolation to her—perhaps he had already so done. At all events, the poor dying woman seemed past all necessity, and yet contrived, although speechless, to hug the half inanimate form of a young child close to her bosom. As for the two nurses, they appeared to know that they were powerless for good, although one of them had just busied herself with the concoction of some mutton broth which she placed in a basin on the table.

It was at this juncture that another pauper nurse came in, bringing the hamper basket containing that little child whom the porter had found attached to the bell-handle.

"What is that you are bringing in?" queried the matron.

"Please, mum, it's another little innocent," replied the woman.

"What! another brat? Whose is it now?"

“Please, mum, I don’t know. Old Tom, the porter, found it hanging to the door-bell.”

On this explanation, the bag was opened by one of the nurses, and found to contain a young female child, small and weakly, apparently only a few days old, wrapped carefully up in flannels and other clothing, with a piece of paper attached to the basket itself, pinned on, and with the following directions :—

“To be called Mabel, and taken good care of for a few weeks, when it will be called for by its parents, or some one authorised to do so. Tied up in the child’s dress will be found three sovereigns.”—Signed, X.Y.Z.

This writing, which was in a fair hand and upon fine paper, clearly indicated that some curious necessity had occasioned the present proceeding; the money also proved that no absolute pauper was concerned in the transaction.

If there is any one thing in the world more than another calculated to attract the attention of women, it is the sight of a young child, a baby, and most particularly a baby girl. In the present instance all else was forgotten; three or four sick patients raised their heads to catch a glimpse. The matron, somewhat mollified by the knowledge that money was to hand, caused the child to be at once stripped and examined to see if any special marks were upon it, also in order to draw some conclusions, if possible, from the wrappings which half-filled the basket, but no marks were on the child’s body, and the linen, together with the basket, told nothing of import.

"It is a very weakly child," said one of the nurses.

"Much the same as the other," replied her companion, taking the dying pauper's child from its mother.

"They are much of a muchness, sure enough," interposed the matron; "put them together and see which is the tallest."

Upon this the first of the two nurses took off the pauper child's clothing, and placed the two girls together on the outside of that bed occupied by the dying woman, who, uttering a cry, caused the matron to hasten to the side of the bed, as also did the clergyman, who, it appeared, had been waiting for a special purpose.

"Get her to tell me by what name I shall baptise the child," were the first words spoken by the rev. gentleman, who, it appeared, had been for some time waiting to christen the child, which was not expected to live many hours.

"Her name is Alice," feebly spoke the dying woman.

"And your own name?" asked the clergyman.

"Gray," replied the woman.

"Married?" again questioned the clergyman.

But before any further reply could be uttered, the poor woman turned sadly on one side, breathed heavily for a few moments, and with one long sigh expired.

"It is all over," exclaimed the clergyman, in accents of relief; "cover her up, please, and now let me finish my business and go."

"What business, parson?" asked one of the nurses, somewhat pointedly.

"Business - - ahem," replied he, "to perform the

ceremony of baptism, a very sacred rite, a sacrament—ahem ! you understand.”

“Yes, parson, on one of them two, or both ?”

“May as well kill two birds with one stone,” exclaimed the matron ; “one of them is to be called Alice, the other, as that paper says, Mabel. Do the job at once, and make an end of it. I hate stopping in the room with a dead body.”

“So be it then, I will baptise the two ; send for a godfather, and any one of you women will serve as godmother.”

“Old Tom will do—call him. He has been godfather to some fifty others, and will serve for fifty more.”

Old Tom, the porter, was speedily summoned, and one of the nurses, whose name was Bunch, volunteering to stand godmother, the “ceremony” of baptising the two children was about to proceed, but by no means after the fashion of that ceremonial at a place of worship ; for the clergyman was gownless (or surpliceless), the sponsors were by no means in holiday attire, the two children were stark naked, there was no book in the hands of the officiating clergyman, and there was no “font ;” but in lieu of other arrangements a common deal table stood before the fireplace, with a basin on it containing some liquid or other.

“Bring me some water,” demanded the clergyman ; “stay—here is some beside me,” he continued.

“That ain’t water, that’s mutton broth,” exclaimed Nurse Bunch.

“Mutton broth, is it ?” exclaimed the clergyman ;

"tut, tut, never mind, we will suppose it water instead."

"It's thin enough for water, anyhow," muttered the other nurse.

The ceremony of baptising the two children then took place, the one being called "Mabel," the other "Alice," after which the clergyman put on his hat, and departed as quickly as possible, followed by the porter, leaving the matron and nurses to perform their several duties both to the living and the dead, but not before Nurse Bunch had muttered to herself the following dreadfully vulgar words, "Blowed if I don't think Parson has given the wrong names to the two blessed babbies—humph!"

Early next morning an awful rumour was afloat; a murder had been committed in the vicinity of Farnham Park, in the preserves of the Bishop. It was a game keeper who had been shot, presumably by poachers. Suspicion fell upon a certain man named Jones, who resided close to Aldershot Green. Two constables from Farnham, being dispatched with orders to see into the mystery, were led by Timothy Weazel to the residence of the Joneses, where no Joneses were to be found, but in lieu thereof such articles of furniture only as could not have been readily carried away in hasty flight, such as the bed, bedding, a table, some chairs, and a few other chattels of little value, rendering it perfectly clear that the murderer and his wife, Jones, alias Trollope, had escaped in time to avoid apprehension, as ultimately proved to be a fact, not merely for a time, but for all time, fifteen years having afterwards passed away without any clue being found to their whereabouts.

Our tale must now fall into reticence for a long period, the filling up of which with detail would only be unnecessarily tedious, leading up only to a sequence which will sufficiently explain itself in a following chapter, wherein the "love-stone" will enact its part sufficiently well to account for its title, but needing only a few connecting links to carry over a hiatus of fifteen years.

CHAPTER VI.

NOTWITHSTANDING a hiatus of fifteen years, it is necessary to afford several links of connection between the two portions of narrative in order to bring them into proper sequence of connection.

Mrs. Captain Turnbull never reached India, but died on the voyage, in consequence of the delicate state of health which necessitated her embarkation too soon. The Dowager Lady Drinkwater also met her death in a few months, through misadventure, having been thrown out of her carriage, when she fell on one side and crushed her ribs into her lungs. She did not, however, die until she had learned the trick imposed on her by her step-daughter, whose fortune of £10,000 she alienated from Captain Turnbull, in accordance with the provisions of the late Admiral's will.

Captain Turnbull, overpowered with grief at the death of his wife, found himself ordered off to the scene of war,

and not at all likely to be otherwise employed for some years to come. Newspapers were not then, as now, commonly transmitted to distant climes, and the one special news from Aldershot which might have arrested his attention came not to hand.

Being much embarrassed through many circumstances, he decided on allowing his infant child to remain in the charge of Mrs. Jones for possibly a few years to come, and accordingly directed a letter to Messrs. Cox and Greenwood, his bankers, whereby *they* were empowered to pay Mrs. Mary Jones the sum of fifty pounds every six months, on her appearing at their office *with the child in her arms*, and forwarding, through them, a half-yearly account of the said child's health.

In accordance with this arrangement, every six months, for the space of four years, Mary Jones presented herself at the Banking Establishment of Messrs. Cox and Greenwood, bearing in her arms a young child, received the sum of fifty pounds, and deposited, for transmission, a letter containing satisfactory news.

At the end of four years, Captain Turnbull, anxious to know what his child was like, commissioned her nurse to obtain a likeness of it painted on ivory, and received accordingly, at the expiration of another six months, a locket portrait, purporting to be *the* likeness in question—at which he was very much both surprised and annoyed. He therefore on the next occasion wrote to Mrs. Jones, as follows :—

*
MRS. MARY JONES,—

I received, per last post, a miniature portrait, the sight of which fills me with surprise and disappointment, compelling me to imagine that you have made a strange mistake. My late wife's eyes were blue, and her hair of light golden tint, so far as I had judgment to observe. My infant girl had also blue eyes, and the promise of very light hair, while the portrait you send me represents a child with hazel eyes and jet black hair! What can it mean? have you sent me a wrong picture by mistake? Explain by return of post, or I must take measures to have the matter investigated through the agency of a friend.

J. A. TURNBULL,

Captain R.E.I.C.S.

The return post brought no letter of explanation to Captain Turnbull, and on the arrival of the next period of six months, no Mrs. Mary Jones applied to Messrs. Cox and Greenwood for the customary fifty pounds—nor at any further time, also.

Greatly embarrassed how to proceed in this matter, Captain Turnbull at length obtained the services of a lady returning to England, a widow named Williams, whose home was in the neighbourhood of Aldershot, at Batchet Lea. Acquainting this lady with the history of his case, omitting no one particular, that lady, on arriving at her home, was put into possession of all the particulars known concerning the murder at Farnham, the flight of Jones, and the suspicious circumstance of a young female child having been left in a basket at the gate of Farnham Workhouse.

Putting all those circumstances together, the widowed lady took her way to Farnham Workhouse, where she was made acquainted with all the particulars which could be given ; the clothes, the basket, and the written paper which accompanied the child were shown, leaving little doubt that the infant in question was really the daughter of Captain and Mrs. Turnbull ; as also, that whatever child Mrs. Mary Jones had borne in her arms at the Bank of Messrs. Cox and Greenwood was surreptitious.

Next came the terrible intelligence that the child baptised " Mabel " HAD DIED three weeks afterwards, and was buried in Aldershot Churchyard.

This intelligence, being forwarded to Captain Turnbull in India, put a climax to his misfortunes, and for the time being directed all his thoughts and ambition to the fortunes of war, in which service he continued, rising step by step, till he attained the rank of Major-General, when he determined on retiring upon his laurels to the land of his birth, a soured man, with no object in life except to die in peace, for he had loved his late wife too well to ever contemplate seeking another.

On arriving at Southampton, after a long and weary voyage, General Turnbull reported himself, and remaining three days only in London, determined on paying one visit to the scene of his early misfortune, and learning if anything further remained to clear up the mystery of his child's disappearance, or of its identification with the infant left at Farnham Workhouse.

His first attempt was made at Aldershot Green, where he found the cottage once tenanted by Thomas Jones

and wife in the occupation of strangers who knew nothing; Timothy Weazel, late parish constable, had received his last pension, and no one of the old tenants knew aught of Thomas Jones, nor did any report of assize or sessions tell of his conviction or whereabouts.

Farnham Workhouse was next visited, but all its old officials had gone to other parts or other occupations; some, even, to another world.

The records of the establishment told only that, fifteen years ago, one child named "Mabel Gray" had died, aged five weeks; and that another child named "Alice Gray" had been educated on the establishment, till she had been taken away on service, at the age of fourteen, by a lady who resided at Ash.

This information, though tolerably precise, was yet not quite satisfactory. Was the child named Mabel Gray in truth Mabel Turnbull? He must try to find the clergyman who christened the child, and therefore made his way to the parish of Cove, to which the rev. gentleman in question had been transferred.

There he found him, and learned that, no name having been signified on the paper which accompanied the infant left at the workhouse gate, the name of "Gray" had been given to it, because it was the first which suggested itself, being the same name as that given to the pauper child named Alice. Further than that he knew nothing; he had no occasion to deal with other than the more advanced children of the place, and had given up the chaplaincy five years later. The surgeon at Ash was next sought, but he was dead.

As a last resource General Turnbull advertised for weeks in every daily paper, calling upon one "Mary Trollope" (the real name of Mary Jones) to learn "something to advantage," but nothing resulted from this.

Worn, weary, and utterly wretched, but still dissatisfied with all he had attempted to learn, the unfortunate General made his way to Ash once more, in order to find the lady who had received the pauper girl, Alice Gray, into service; but there again he met with failure, that lady having "passed over to the majority" six months ago, and the young girl had disappeared.

Mrs. Williams, the widow of a brother officer, and who, while residing at Batchet Lea, had made the first inquiries at Farnham Workhouse several years ago, was abroad, and married again, only three months before.

Thus, with every clue lost, the world-worn man, with no relative living—for all his brothers had fallen, either in their country's service or otherwise—returned to London, took lodgings in the vicinity of Hanover Square, joined the Oriental Club, and for nigh upon twelve months passed the whole of his time at that establishment, in the society of those who, like himself, had passed the greater portion of their days in the East.

Scarce more than forty-three years of age, he at one time thought of "purchasing a ticket, once again, in the grand lottery of marriage," as some heartless cynic has expressed it. He was conscious of tolerably good looks, was also well off, and his rank as Major-General, at an earlier age than is usual, gave him a certain position in society by no means to be despised by the gentler sex;

but then—he felt none of that longing desire for female companionship which had possessed him in early life ; also, he had never ceased to mourn for her he had so deeply and romantically loved—and lost.

Strange, too, as it might seem, the only living relative of his late wife, the present baronet, Sir Thomas Drinkwater, he had never seen, that gentleman having left the military service and taken to diplomacy, finding his occupation at the Court of Russia, where he was likely to remain.

It was thus, dwelling on his utter loneliness in the world, save for the companionship of his Oriental friends, that he one day turned his thoughts back to the locality of his great misfortune—the loss of his child. He would revisit the district of Aldershot, and re-investigate every material point. Fortunately for this purpose, he had learned that the Mrs. Captain Williams of former days, but now a Mrs. Colonel Baldwin, wife of a retired officer in the Royal service, had returned to her old home at Batchet Lea, and would, he was quite sure, give him a friendly welcome.

Twelve months, therefore, after his former visit to Aldershot, General Turnbull made his way by coach to the “Bush” Inn, Farnham, and from thence in a hired fly to Batchet Lea, where he found a hearty welcome, with an invitation to remain as long as he might find convenient.

Colonel Baldwin was one of those unlucky gentlemen who, entering the Royal service without interest of any kind, had attained his rank only by the slowest possible

steps—he had retired with only the brevet rank, at fifty years of age—and had lived on his half-pay only until his marriage with Mrs. Williams, whose little property at Batchet Lea enabled him to keep up his position very much better than heretofore. He and his wife had left England immediately after their marriage, and had returned only within the last fortnight.

Dinner having been announced, almost immediately after his arrival at Batchet Lea, General Turnbull had no opportunity for conversing with Mrs. Colonel Baldwin until after withdrawal to the lady's symposium—the tea-table—when, seated by the side of a comfortable fire, and a little at a loss how to begin his inquiries, he unconsciously performed an act which was familiar to him—that of rubbing his hands together—after that described by Thomas Hood as “washing his hands with invisible soap and imperceptible water.” This action, by no means an uncommon one, had, in this instance, an uncommon result, for it caused him to start suddenly and utter a slight exclamation, followed by a repetition of the act with increased energy.

“You seem uneasy, General ; do you feel your hands cold that you rub them so persistently ?” queried Mrs. Colonel Baldwin.

“Not cold,” replied the General, “but somewhat astonished, indeed, almost frightened.”

“How ! what mean you ?” questioned Colonel Baldwin.

“I can scarcely explain,” replied the General, “I believe I am a superstitious fool, and do not know what I am about.”

Hereupon, General Turnbull, with some trepidation of manner, took off his ring—that same ring which has formerly been alluded to as the one possessed by the General's late wife, as containing a “love-stone.”

Taking this ring off his finger and rubbing it carefully with his handkerchief, the General once more uttered an exclamation and fell back in his chair, without life or motion to all appearance.

As a matter of course, the utmost surprise was felt by host and hostess at this inexplicable event; a glass of wine, immediately tendered, was thrust away with a cry of “Water, water.”

Water, immediately supplied by the Colonel, somewhat relieved the sufferer, who, on recovering himself, tendered such explanation as he could afford, being very nearly the same as that given, on a former occasion, by the General's late wife. That ring, containing a curious-looking stone, was accredited with a singular susceptibility—that of becoming somewhat lustrous in the close vicinity of an object beloved by its wearer, while it remained without lustre otherwise. General Turnbull had never quite believed in the superstition to which this gave rise, neither had he quite rejected it. He knew that his father, who had received the gift from a Fakir to whom he had rendered a great service, did believe in its strange virtue, also that his late wife had believed in it; but as for himself, he had simply thought that friction, or possibly friction and heat combined, had produced the effects recorded.

He had taken the ring off his wife's finger after her

death, and worn it ever since without having at any time seen its dulness pass off, or any degree of brilliancy attach to it until this very evening, and now it was bright almost as a ruby.

“I could almost believe the spirit of my dear wife is present,” exclaimed the General, “and thus I salute the token.”

With this, General Turnbull kissed the insensate stone, replaced it on his finger, and remained silent, in a species of ecstatic reflection.

After a few minutes given to the absorbed General’s embarrassment, Mrs. Baldwin addressed him—

“I never, of course, saw your late wife ; have you any portrait of her, or memorial of any kind, by which I could know what she was like ?”

“I have her miniature here,” replied the General, taking a locket, with a ribbon attached, from his breast and handing it for inspection.

“Why, as I live, it is the very image of my little waiting maid, Amelia Goldney !” exclaimed that lady.

“How—what !” almost shouted the General. “A little maid, with blue eyes and golden hair—at what age, at what age ?”

“Sixteen, or thereabout,” replied Mrs. Baldwin. “I took her from service at Ash, and have partly educated her. She is up stairs even now.”

“May the great God of Heaven be thanked for all mercies !” exclaimed the General, falling on his knees. “For, as I am a living man, that little maid is my lost daughter, and the mystery of this ring is true.”

On hearing this, Mrs. Baldwin hastily withdrew, and in a few moments, during which her husband had the greatest difficulty in calming the agitation of his guest, that lady returned, leading in a graceful young woman, with the exact features, eyes, and hair of the miniature portrait just shown.

The scene which ensued baffles all description. Some attractive force appeared to draw the elderly gentleman and the young girl together, a degree of force not quite equal perhaps, for that on the part of the elderly man was the force of hope, if not of conviction, that he was embracing his daughter, while that of the young girl was the force of an attracting sympathy which forbade her to rebel against the embrace of a strange man, even though she knew him not, and would certainly have repelled a younger one.

Astonishment, hope, joy, and embarrassment followed each other, and seized on all alike in different degrees before anything like an explanation could take place with a view towards better knowledge.

Colonel and Mrs. Baldwin left the General and the young maiden together for awhile, during which period the latter named recited the brief history of her life, telling that from her earliest recollection of time she had been well treated in the Farnham Workhouse, where she had received ordinary education until, after being somewhat advanced, she had gained extra knowledge through being engaged as teacher under the preceptress of the institution, when she was in a manner forced to enter upon service, according to new rules introduced by the Poor-Law Guardians.

She had, in accordance with such rules, been engaged by a lady at Ash, who also treated her with kindness, but died within three months, leaving the little waif to shift for herself.

This she set about doing by first changing her name to Amelia Goldney instead of Alice Gray, in the hope of concealing her "workhouse brand."

It was thus she entered the service of Mrs. Colonel Baldwin, who, finding her above the common capacity, had still further advanced her education in twelve months' travel, which brought her brief history up to the present time.

With the innate conviction that Amelia Goldney, otherwise Alice Gray, was in reality his child, in despite of opposing circumstances, General Turnbull determined on probing facts to their uttermost depth.

He questioned the young girl as to her earliest recollections, which, it seems, turned on a nurse whose name was Bunch, one who had been extra kind to her, but who had left the workhouse on being found heiress to a small property.

This woman had left the neighbourhood, but the Colonel determined on advertising for her whereabouts in all speed.

The advertisement, inserted at once, produced its effect, and better effect than could have been anticipated, for it obtained reply not only from Nurse Bunch, but from Mary Trollope, who, noting the application to be made to General Turnbull, thought it best to relieve her conscience by telling the truth.

* Giving priority to her statement, it came to pass that on the very day after the departure of Captain Turnbull and lady for India, Tom Jones had fired on a game-keeper who had detected him in the act of poaching. He had been recognised by the dying man, and, knowing it would be impossible to escape otherwise than by flight, had so done, accompanied by his wife, who, not choosing to encumber herself with an infant, had left it at the workhouse, as explained before. Her after life had been unfortunate. Jones had evaded detection by changing his name and occupation as well ; he had turned sober, and found occupation at the London Docks, but fell off the quay and was drowned before the expiration of twelve months. Mrs. Jones, otherwise Trollope, had sought to keep up the falsehood of her position by receiving the Captain's pay just so long as possible without incurring the risk of detection, hiring a child for her half-yearly receipt of money at the bank, and purchasing the miniature of the Captain's supposed infant from the show-case of an artist in the Strand, but making the fatal mistake of choosing one with dark eyes and hair in place of one with blue eyes and flaxen curls, thus rendering all further application for money dangerous.

The unfortunate woman, not truly so wicked as she seemed, had also caused inquiries to be made at Farnham Workhouse, where she learned the same tale as others had learned, never doubting that her patron's child had really died as reported. Her after life had been one continuous downfall, bringing with it misery, remorse, and repentance, until the Captain's, or rather the

General's, last advertisement, by offering her an opportunity to somewhat relieve her overburthened conscience with confession of her crime.

Nurse Bunch, on her part, made no mystery of what she knew, but at once explained that it was the pauper child which had been baptised in the wrong name of "Mabel," and died, while the newly arrived child had been baptised "Alice" by mistake, and which lived on in perfect health up to the time of Nurse Bunch's departure from the union by reason of a legacy which rendered her independent.

A comparison of notes and dates between the union officials, Mary Trollope, and Nurse Bunch left no more to be explained, nor was there need, for an instinctive conviction filled the heart of General Turnbull that his own true daughter existed in the person of that blue-eyed flaxen-haired maiden whom chance, or Providence, had brought to his arms and his heart through the agency of his "love-stone" ring, which from thenceforth became a treasure of inestimable value, never again losing its brightness, but whether in accordance with the fact that he and his daughter never again parted, or because of the constant friction to which it became subjected in constant wear, is not quite certain; he, nevertheless, believed in its virtue, and that was enough.

More need not be told, save that General Turnbull caused his daughter to be well educated, and found her a worthy husband in due course, without which climax to a narrative no discreet historian would dare to face his lady readers, even in print, and so, with a tale thus pointed, ends the mystery of "THE LOVE-STONE."

THE FOX AND HOUNDS.

“Interdum vulgus rectum videt.”

HORACE, 2 Ep.

CHAPTER I.

ON the extreme verge of Aldershot parish, looking southward towards Farnham, and within a few hundred yards of the running stream which separates the county of Hampshire from the county of Surrey, there stands an ancient domicile more than three hundred years old, which, in its palmy days, was of aspect very different from that of its present seeming. It now stands low, but once stood much above its present level, with diamond-paned windows, and a porch over its door, both of which have yielded place to an ugly change, rendering its long low frontage more venerable than picturesque, but even yet giving evidence of respectable solidity in the beams of staunch oak which not only support its roof-tree, but in transverse length show how much more our old builders valued convenience than ornament.

This unpretentious domicile, with its roof of semi-circular tiles as perfectly intact as on the day of erection, is now divided into several portions, under separate tenants, but was once the residence of well-to-do persons whose very names, like unto their belongings, have fallen into low estate, after the manner of sublunary things in general and family reputation in particular.

To the inhabitants of both Aldershot and Farnham

this certainly remarkable tenement, located in what is now called the "Dog Kennels," is well known as a hostelry of the very simplest note, under the title of the "Fox and Hounds," probably on account of association with the "Kennels" at one time on the spot or near it; be this as it may, the old house itself is now, and has been for at least twenty years, tenanted by an honest man named Browning, who dispenses good ale, brewed from Hampshire malt and Farnham hops, for the delectation of such wayfarers as may choose in summer time to take shelter under its arbour'd benches, or in winter time to seek the warmth of its cosy old-fashioned ingle-nook; yet, in all probability, such wayfarers little heed or know that the unpretending "house of call" has been the locale of an incident strangely mixed up with the history of this realm, albeit one of little note as regards its importance.

Old houses have almost always a history attached, even the very humblest among them, and it is to the persistent inquiries of travellers that curious facts are brought out which might else have lain concealed from public knowledge, even though their evidence lay almost beneath our very eyes, but to be brought to light by means of questioning old men, or still oftener old women, who tell the tales told to them by their predecessors—a kind of oral history which escapes books, but yet is as much the true history as the Epics of Homer or the Ballads of the ancient Scalds, who were, in all probability, not much better than the old crones of to-day, so far as veracity is concerned.

It is to the prattle of sundry old men and women, together with the semi-historical record of an old bank clerk, named Piper (who was pensioned off by the eminent banking firm of Messrs. Knight, at Farnham), that the material of the following tale has been furnished, and is now given in a connected form as thus chronicled.

There is scarce any period of English history within the last two hundred years, or even more, concerning which so many divers accounts have been rendered as that which brought about the restoration of the Stuarts.

Lord Macauley, the greatest historian of modern times, whose diligence of research was nearly as great as that of the learned Gibbon, has exposed many fallacies of quasi-historic tradition, but still left much undone for minor investigators and less learned critics. The rights and wrongs of the wherefore, touching the return of King Charles the Second to the realm of his "martyred" father, is one of the crooked facts which it behoves modern investigators to *put straight*.

On the landing of Charles Stuart, sallow faced, and sardonic of feature, but yet designated "the merry monarch," the Royalist historians, or, as they were called, "Cavaliers," did their best to make appear that a loyal love for the old dynasty was at the root of public rejoicings, and the acclamations which greeted his "Most Sacred Majesty" on his first appearance seemed to give colour to that assertion; well-instructed politicians being at the same time fully assured that it was upon the surface of things only that this welcome was accorded, the true reasons lying far beneath that surface.

Many circumstances occurred to bring about a somewhat sudden change. During the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell almost everything in the shape of public recreation was prohibited. Long faces, long homilies, square cut clothes, cropped hair, and a nasal twang of speech prevailed so uniformly throughout the land that a broad grin, a short speech, a well-cut doublet, and a merry wink of the eye were all little short of treason to the ruling powers. Not only were stage-plays obstinately prohibited, but almost every kind of popular amusement was suppressed, bear-baiting, cock-fighting, wrestling, and even the innocent May-pole, vetoed by the sad-faced, crop-headed Puritans, whose hypocritical assumption of religion threw a gloom over society to such an extent that a re-action of some kind became inevitable, in the course of human nature and a rational course of events, which else—like an overstrained bow—had broken with a crash.

So long as the strong arm of Cromwell swayed the multitude, no man dared rebel. But no sooner did the weak arm of his amiable but feeble-hearted son attempt to rule than the multitude uprose in its strength, as a strong horse might throw off its rider, and the landing of King Charles became a sudden excuse for all licence of action, beyond even the uttermost bounds of decent thought and outward propriety of demeanour. Long faces relaxed into unseemly mirth, the churches were deserted, velvets and brocade took the place of sad-coloured clothing, ringlets and love-locks resumed their supremacy, stage-plays and all other public amusements

became resuscitated, and a saturnalia of modified kind prevailed almost everywhere, except among a minority of the Puritans, who, more conscientious than the rest, still held to their flag, and their conventicles—a kind of middle class between the nobles, who were all Royalists, and the lower stratum of society, who were almost to a man heartily sick of Republicanism, because of its restrictions.

Once upon the throne of his ancestors, King Charles the Second gave full rein to the licence of his own party, sneering at religion and openly defying the moralities of life, greatly to the scandal of his Parliament, which was still composed of pretty nearly as many men of the Puritan party as of the Royalist—Whigs and Tories had not been invented, but there was still a Government clique and an Opposition, who fought against each other as in modern time.

Party spirit asserted itself on all occasions, and the “merry monarch” had not occupied his high position many years before the Parliament divided itself into two factions, so to be called, on the religious question. An open disregard of the Sabbath had scandalised the religious, or Opposition party, just at the time when “his Most Sacred Majesty” had begged for a subsidy of eighty thousand pounds, nominally to pay his private debts, but most particularly to pay the expenses of his concubines, among whom “De Quarrielles,” just made Duchess of Portsmouth, was the principal ; and Eleanor Gwynn, a dairymaid and actress, was of secondary consideration. Mademoiselle de Quarrielles, had been, as was

supposed, purposely sent over by the King of France for political purposes, and had become extremely unpopular, while Eleanor Gwynn was by no means disliked by the people at large, who looked upon the "gallantries" of those above them with a gentle eye.

King Charles, as herein stated, had asked his Parliament for a subsidy, which had been refused, greatly to the discomfiture of his Majesty's friends and advisers, chief among whom was the witty but notorious Rochester, who, being a Peer of the Realm, hoped to influence the Parliament if ever an opportunity occurred for the attempt. Meanwhile, so equally balanced were the two parties of the House in respect of a Bill framed for preserving the sanctity of the Sabbath, that a few of the more sober advisers of the King counselled acquiescence with the demands of the "Sabbatarians," as they were called, but to this his Majesty demurred, saying "Why should poor devils who work hard during six days of the week be prevented from enjoying themselves on the seventh day?"

Touching this matter, it must be remembered that King Charles, during his long stay on the Continent, had most probably framed his ideas upon the customs prevailing in France, where, after morning Mass, the commonalty took relaxation to themselves for the remainder of the day. It was even suspected that he was a Catholic at heart, some even stigmatised him as an Atheist, or at best a Deist (Infidel being the more chosen word), but, as he at least professed Protestantism, his friends thought it expedient to assume that he was a sound Churchman,

and, with the exception of Rochester, Buckingham, and a few others, advised his consent to the framing of an Act whereby the religion of the State should become more perfectly recognised in the observance of "The Lord's Day."

This advice of the moderate faction prevailed so far as to enable an Act to be framed for the purpose so intended. But to this his Majesty still refused assent, out of revenge for the refusal to which he had been submitted in the matter of his subsidy.

Egged on to expense by his favourite Rochester, and bled of his cash to the uttermost by his favourite mistress, De Quarrielles, whom his enemies described as a "jewel-eater," he became terribly in debt, having raised loans from the citizens of London, which he could not repay, and is suspected of having filched certain diamonds from the Crown to make a necklace for the Duchess of Portsmouth, and of having had recourse to a certain Lombardy merchant in a manner extremely objectionable.

It was at this juncture that the Earl of Rochester evolved out of his inner consciousness the following plan, or at least we may suppose it to have been such, knowing the issue which resulted as a consequence, after the following manner in a conversation.

"Would it not be best for your Majesty to comply with this Act of your faithful Parliament, by throwing a sop to Cerberus?" queried the earl.

"How now," replied the monarch, "what mean you?"

"As the price of the subsidy refused before—your

sign manual for eighty thousand pounds—shall it be so, Rowley?”

“Odds fish ; a capital idea ! Only will the Parliament swallow that bait ?”

“Hungry gudgeons will swallow a worm. Let your Majesty signify to your faithful people that you are deeply concerned for the errors of your ways and anxious to reform. Tell them you will go to church thrice on a Sunday, once every week-day, renounce high play, give up the wine-cup, send your mistresses—how many are there ?—a dozen ! well—to a nunnery or elsewhere ; cut your Royal hair short, wear a sad-coloured jerkin and renounce Genoa velvet. The fools will believe you, and—”

“Pay me eighty thousand pounds for laughing at their credulity ! Odds fish, but I would do it, only that I do not think my faithful people are such asses !”

“Your Majesty’s faithful people are of that breed, and will cross the *pons asinorum* of your Royal word with alacrity—give them but the chance, Rowley !”

“As like as not, only—odds fish—who takes our Royal word nowadays ? Not our loyal citizens of London—not our worthy merchant of Lombardy—not even our bosom friend, the Earl of Rochester, who insisted on our Royal sign manual in discharge of a trifling loss at *ecarté*, eh !”

“How now, Rowley ! dost fling thy autograph in my face, that hath given thee mine for a thousand pounds ?”

“Which are even yet unpaid—go to ! But touching this matter of the subsidy, dost think the bait will take ?”

“Of a surety, yes!—my liege, my Rowley, my sire, my friend, my worshipful companion in all iniquity—yes! I know a way to make the fish bite. I have a rod in pickle, a line strong enough to catch a whale, and a hook sharp enough in all probability to—to—”

“Away with your probabilities! Show us a certainty, and we will comply with any requisition. Will your fish swallow a king’s word for bait that has thrice befooled them; expound.”

“Verily they will, an the bait be well garnished. I have a plan in this my noddle which cannot fail, call me a fool else.”

“Say a knave, rather.”

“Yes, Rowley, even so! THE KNAVE OF TRUMPS, which shall win eighty thousand pounds at one swoop. Ha, ha!”

“So be it then, work your will—play your game out, the stakes are worth some risk. Only pledge not our Royal word beyond our Royal keeping—humanity is fallible.”

“What does my Rowley mean? What are pledges made for but to become broken?”

“A man’s pledge, but not a king’s.”

“Diabolus!—an I make thee out a saint to Parliament, let the Parliament hold fast the pledges, for it is they will accept it, and the acceptor pays the bill.”

“As thou wilt, as thou wilt. We would fain be honest, an it costs not too much. Once for all, I am a king, REMEMBER!”

“Such was the last word of your Royal sire, but—”

“Silence ! Dare but utter that word again, and—”

Thus ended the colloquy, or after such fashion it may have ended, for certain it is that Rochester's advice prevailed. King Charles, who had no more religion in his soul than a cabbage has gold in its heart, gave his sanction to the famous “Act” which even now retains its sway. He received his subsidy ; Louise de Quarrielles received a “carcanet of pearls,” worth seven thousand pounds ; Mistress Nelly Gwynn received a gilded tablet, with the Royal effigy, painted by Hudson ; the Duke of Buckingham, the Earl of Rochester, and other Court favourites received a modicum of repayment. A few others, including a certain merchant banker, nigh to “the Temple,” received their dues, and all went “merry as a marriage bell” while the money lasted, and the King laughed in his sleeve behind the screen of his pew in the Chapel Royal at St. James's Palace, while the Reverend Boanerges Strongpull declaimed against the iniquities of the lower orders throughout the land.

Meanwhile the “Act” itself gave only mixed satisfaction to a few, and general dissatisfaction to very many who, not knowing its exact provisions, had conceived extraordinary ideas upon the subject—many believing that the said Act empowered churchwardens to drive persons to church, like a flock of sheep, and that individuals rebelling against the Act could be subjected to extreme penalty, such as a fine for the first rebellion, imprisonment in the stocks or pillory for the second, and to be hanged, drawn, and quartered for a third. Very few persons being able to read or write, the provisions of the

Act were banded from mouth to mouth, with additions according to the reciter's fancy, till the public ire was excited up to a pitch of frenzy in certain districts where a few parishioners were escorted to church by the churchwardens in ignoble procession, whereby the rabble hooted and hissed to little edification of the law or its abiders, Farnham being one of the first localities wherein the law was met, not merely by defiance, but in a spirit of ridicule, as will be found in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

IT was on a Sunday, early in the month of February, 1675, that a couple of well-to-do townsmen had been escorted to the parish church *against their will*, and, therefore, in custody, "so to say," of the churchwardens, who were enjoined by "the Act" to compel attendance—*nolens volens*—it being understood or misunderstood that neither the halt, the blind, nor the imbecile were exempted from such attendance.

As regarded the present instance, it was shrewdly suspected that the two townsmen in question were parties to their own contumacy, with intent to make the law resisted by others. Be this as it may, the rabble took the matter in a way peculiar to its own humorous fancy, and seizing hold of a soldier with two wooden legs, as

also a gibbering idiot—both of whom were incapacitated from obeying the law—placed them in the double stocks, which then found place at the west end of the market hall—that very market hall or town hall which was only lately demolished, and replaced by the present erection.

While these two unfortunates were thus placed, a mob surrounded them, alternately hooting and hissing, pelting with rotten eggs, and plying them with drink until the popular clamour became so uproarious that serious mischief seemed imminent, and it was feared that the houses of the churchwardens would be attacked. Nothing of the kind, however, took place, and up to the hour of five o'clock, before it was quite dusk, the effervescence of the multitude had resulted in drunkenness and threats only—the poor wooden-legged soldier being rendered insensible through the strange kindness of his friendly enemies and strong drink.

Leaving the multitude to its folly, our scene changes to the high road from Portsmouth to London, through Farnham, where, at the outskirts of the latter, a small cavalcade was seen approaching.

Two horsemen, in a sort of plain livery, with leathern belts round their waists, rode in advance before three females, also on horseback, with Pillion saddles, and warmly attired in a fashion which proclaimed them above the common rank. The centre one of these three was muffled up to the eyes, and rode her strong serviceable palfrey in a way that indicated fatigue. Her two female companions were both young and pretty, but neither of them so heavily clad, nor so slow of movement as their

mistress, but, on the contrary, sat easily on their horses, appearing full of life and spirit. Behind them followed two armed men, evidently retainers, in steel corselets over their leathern jerkins, and with clumsy-looking horse pistols in their holsters, ready to defend those whom they served, as well as themselves if necessary.

Turning towards one of her handmaidens, for such they were, the lady who appeared chief of the party said, in a feeble voice, "Methinks, if yonder town be Farnham, or Fearnham, I must needs rest me there, for I am a-weary, a-weary of this long travel."

"Assuredly, Mistress Nell, it is needful you should, considering your condition," replied the handmaid so addressed.

"And yet it was planned for us to reach Guildford, according to what Master Vernon advised," interposed the other handmaiden.

"Master Vernon should have met us ere this," again spoke the principal female, whom it is unnecessary to keep in disguise, for she was Mistress Eleanor Gwynn, the King's favourite and least disreputable concubine, then on her journey towards London for her accouchement.

"Master Vernon is, maybe, better engaged than in keeping troth with three distressed women," interrupted the first speaker; when Mistress Gwynn, who had looked anxiously before her, suddenly exclaimed—

"Ah! If I mistake not, that is he who approaches even now, and see—see—he waves us back with his hand, what can it mean?"

It was indeed Master Vernon who approached on horseback, and in evident trouble. This young gentleman, a tall handsome lad of some twenty summers, was the son of a Royalist landholder, residing at a mansion between Batchetlea and Aldershot, at which house the unfortunate Monarch Charles the First had once slept on his passage from Carisbrook to London, and where, as legend tells, he left his night cap, as a souvenir, having nothing else in his possession to leave.

Master Vernon, like his father before him, was a staunch Cavalier, and felt no degradation in bestowing knightly service on his King's mistress, particularly as he had admired Mistress Nelly for her good looks and good temper some twelve months before this time, when she had advanced his suit for Lieutenancy in the King's Guard. Living almost close to Farnham, he had been commissioned by the King to superintend the escort of Mistress Nell from Farnham to Guildford, and was about so to do when he was made aware of the mob rising in the former place, as evinced by his present warning back of the cavalcade.

In a few moments, Master Vernon came up to the party, and, doffing his plumed beaver, intimated that mischief was afloat in the direction of Farnham, which it would be best to avoid by taking some bye-path, instead of passing through the main thoroughfare, the people being riotously inclined.

"They will surely not harm three poor women, sore tired with travel," spoke Nelly Gwynn.

"They are mad with drink and excitement," replied

Master Vernon, "suffer me to lead your palfrey by a road I wot of, and all may be secure."

With this, he personally took Mistress Gwynn's horse by the bridle, and led the cavalcade through a path on the eastern side of the town, passing behind the parish church so as to escape those parts of the town inhabited by the richer sort, and through a sparsely inhabited neighbourhood wherein the very poorest herded together. It was in that line of path wherein there yet stands the birthplace of William Cobbett, but whether that hostelry was then in existence is not quite certain, while it is yet possible that two or three of the meaner class of dwellings now extant might have been just erected. It was while passing along this route, and at a point corresponding with the Market-place, that loud shouts were heard in the distance, indicating that the mob was still in the ascendant, although dusk had begun to fall.

While the attention of the little party was for a moment arrested, the sound of approaching feet drew near, and Master Vernon, thinking it wisest to lie perdu for a time, drew his convoy into a place of concealment behind some brushwood conveniently near, and from which ambush he could see whatever might be about to happen.

This, then, is what occurred—through Downing-street there came some two dozen half-drunken townspeople of the lower sort, two among them bearing in their arms what appeared to be the lifeless body of a man, yet by no means after the solemn procession of a funeral party; quite otherwise, for the bearers of that burthen were chaunting a sort of drunken chorus, intermixed with shouts,

anything but sad or solemn. Onward they came, the disabled or dead man and his bearers, until they reached a low hovel having but one window, and a door which, on being examined, was found to be locked. Whatever may have been the intention of these men, it became arrested on the sudden, for a ruddy gleam in the sky, over the Market-place, and distant cries of "Fire, Fire," caused the bearers of the supposed corpse to place their burthen suddenly on the ground, while others exclaimed "They are burning the stocks, they are burning the pillory ! Let us go and see."

On this, all save two of their number scampered off up Downing-street, while the remaining couple somewhat hurriedly placed the seemingly dead body, which was no other than that of the poor wooden-legged soldier, not dead, but certainly dead-drunk, and clothed in a very old regimental coat, up against the doorway of the hovel before mentioned ; but, as the poor fellow could not be made to stand upon his two wooden appendages, he was perforce placed sitting way, propped in an angle of the door, and so left while his friendly tormentors scampered off at the heels of their brethren to see the fire, which now began to rage furiously.

Touched with pity at the sight of an old soldier in such unworthy plight, Mistress Neli bade Master Vernon see after his condition, not knowing whether he was yet alive or not. "Is the poor man dead ?" she asked.

On which Master Vernon dismounted, and very soon perceived that the poor fellow was yet alive, though in some danger of dying from neglect.

“No, lady,” said Master Vernon, “the poor fellow is not dead, but little short thereof. I know him well. He fought with my father at Marston Moor, but has no other means of living than charity. I have helped him at times myself, and will do so now.”

Thereupon the speaker called on a trooper, one of Mistress Nelly’s guard, to dismount, and with his assistance raised the poor man from his dangerous attitude, and sought means of forcing the door at that hovel which he rightly believed to be his dwelling place ; it required but little force to make entrance, just as a dirty lad came up and told that his grandmother, who had charge of the poor fellow, would soon be there to put him to bed.

“He has a bed, then, to lie in?” interrogated the speaker.

“Yah !” replied the lad. “Granny takes off his legs, and pokes him in there,” pointing to a dark hole at the far extremity of the hut.

“Why does she take off his legs?”

“‘Case he main’t walk off when he don’t ought to,” replied the lad.

Scarcely had these words been spoken than an old beldame hobbled up, and, making her obeisance to “the gentry,” stated that she received one penny per day from the parish parson for attending the old man.

“And what for his keep?” interrogated Mistress Nell.

“Nowt,” shortly replied the old woman, “sometimes one gives him a crust, and sometimes a bowl of milk.”

“And is that all?” exclaimed Nelly, while Master

Vernon and the trooper conveyed the poor man inside the hut, followed by the old woman.

It was then that Mistress Nell, with tears in her eyes, fumbled for a satchel which usually did duty for a purse in those times ; but finding in it only TWO SILVER GROATS, turned, with a burning blush, to Master Vernon, who had just emerged from the hut, saying, "For a poor lost woman's sake, bestow your charity on yon maimed defender of his country. Shame on England's King that such should be, and yet," here she spoke less harshly, "it is not all the King's fault, for his heart is noble, alack ! alack !"

"I have already done what I could ; but see ! Hark ! The mob ; the drunken wretches are still at their wild work and approach this place. We must fly—perhaps for our lives—on ; follow me, we may yet reach Vernon Court ere the night becomes dark."

Obedying this command, the little party of eight pricked on, but not before some dozen of the rabble had caught sight of them ; and, having had an inkling that one of the King's mistresses was on the road, set up a shout, crying, "'Tis the King's leman ! let us pull her from her horse, why should she ride while we are afoot ?"

Timid by nature, and fatigued with travel, beside labouring under the still greater trouble of impending maternity, poor Mistress Nelly Gwynn had great difficulty in keeping her Pillion saddle. She felt terribly alarmed, but nevertheless held her way, followed by shouts from the mob, who, although not like herself mounted, yet contrived to keep pace with the party, and

were only forced back, as a last resource, by one of the two armed followers discharging his piece in the air over their heads.

It soon became apparent that if aid were not forthcoming very, very soon a catastrophe would occur, and at length Master Vernon found himself compelled to restrict the pace, himself leading Mistress Nelly's horse by the rein, while the two serving men pricked on cautiously before crossing the little river at a ford nigh to where the brewery of Messrs. Barrett now looks down upon the shallow waters.

Having crossed, the entire cavalcade took to a foot pace, choosing the nearest route it could towards Vernon Court, to which place he determined on conveying the party, though not without some misgivings as regarded his lady mother, whose strict notions of propriety would rise in arms against such intrusion, *but* as he still pondered, "I must e'en risk it, or worse may ensue." Darkness had now fallen; the roadway was but a bridle path, and the mud over their horses' fetlocks; worse than even this, rain was beginning to fall, ploughed fields and ugly ditches had to be crossed in order to make a near cut to their proposed destination, known only to Master Vernon himself, who unfortunately became so engrossed by his charge that he neglected to direct the attention of the two serving men who pricked on before. Half-an-hour's blundering advance soon told that the right way to Vernon Court had been missed, and it was only on reaching the vicinity of a noble elm tree that Master Vernon knew that he was touching upon the small

village of Weyburne, an almost desolate spot, having little claim in those days to the title of village, insomuch as it consisted of three houses only, and those of the humblest description.

He felt thoroughly non-plussed ; not one of the three small tenements could afford the accommodation he needed for his helpless charge, who now fairly declared herself unable to proceed further ; the rain too began to fall heavily, and it was only through seeking shelter beneath the friendly elm that the three poor females could avoid becoming wet through.

All at once Master Vernon, who knew the prominent features of the country pretty well, remembered that a goodly sized homestead was located at a spot just beyond the running stream, some two or three hundred yards further on.

It was the residence of a grim Puritan yeoman, whose political opinions were, of course, adverse to the Royal cause ; but what matter ?—he would surely not refuse succour to three helpless females in dire need, especially as there was no necessity to tell who they were. At all risks the attempt must be made ; the two troopers kept in the background, as well as the two serving men, Master Vernon and the three females alone showing themselves. Before, however, taking this step he debated with Mistress Nelly and her two companions on the advisability of asking shelter at the great house called “The Manor” almost close by, the same now tenanted by Mrs. Knight, but then in the occupation of a Royalist gentleman, notorious for gay living. Somewhat to his

astonishment all three of the females objected to this, saying they would rather seek the needed hospitality at a humbler place ; and, such being their wish, Master Vernon at once proceeded towards the former locality with all possible speed.

Crossing the little brook, or running stream before alluded to, the little party arrived at a sudden turn in the roadway, and immediately found themselves before a low roofed house of two stories only, but encompassed by a mass of foliage and outbuildings indicative of comfort if not opulence, but without any sign of life about it, for every window was in darkness.

" I fear me the house is untenanted," cried the elder of the two attendants upon Nelly, "and if so the Lord have mercy upon us."

" We will try the effect of a summons," exclaimed Master Vernon, who, calling one of the outriders to hold Nelly's horse, went forthwith to the door of the house, and, finding no knocker or bell, gave a sonorous "Halloa," accompanied by sundry blows with his riding whip, and was right well pleased to find the door opened by a female serving person in lieu of a male. A preliminary question soon brought forth Mrs. Grimshaw, housekeeper to the owner of the place, who was away in Flanders, on the Commissariat Department of the Kingdom, despite his Puritan attachment to the late Commonwealth.

Mrs. Grimshaw was a very severe looking personage of the hardest possible type, and in the ugliest possible

costume, black from top to toe, square built, and diminishing downward ; she might almost have been likened to a coffin standing upright, with its silver name plate for a face, so white were her features, and so black and scanty her robe.

At the first glance of this personage, Master Vernon conceived his errand to be fruitless, but in this he was fortunately mistaken, for Dame Grimshaw was more kindly in her nature than in her looks ; and, after hearing all which it was intended she should hear, consented to afford the three women all possible assistance in the extremity of their need, as also granting permission for their attendants to quarter themselves in the stabling as best they might.

Nor had this arrangement been effected one moment too soon, for the long and uneven travel from Portsmouth, together with the fright encountered at Farnham, had brought on the travail of labour before its time, and it became immediately necessary to obtain the help of a qualified surgeon. One of the troopers was at once despatched back to the town from which he had so lately ridden, with orders to bring the first medical man he could find, "post, post haste," while the other trooper was sent forward to Guildford with directions to bring back a proper conveyance for Mistress Gwynn, whereby her journey might be continued when practicable.

Meanwhile an event was occurring above stairs, which could not await the surgeon's arrival, and an old woman of the neighbourhood, known as "Mother Squalls," was summoned at top speed for the occasion.

*
This "Mother Squalls," the "wise woman" of the district, was a noted character in her way, a sort of rural "Sairey-Gamp," without whose assistance in the parish very few young persons were permitted to enter the world, and very few old ones to go out of it. She and her ugly cub of a son, known as "Jem May" (for Squalls was a professional name only), occupied a shanty in a field close by, where he did odd jobs with the spade and pick at anyone's command. This "Mother Squalls" was clever in her way, and could, at a pinch, concoct all sorts of abominable mixtures from herbs for killing or curing, as luck might ordain. Called in at a pinch, she performed her duties as midwife skilfully enough, but only to usher into the world a dead child of the masculine "persuasion," who, had it lived, might have called itself "Prince," with a bar-sinister on his escutcheon, and a right of sway over broad lands, but, being born dead, was nothing! Immediately after this event came the surgeon from Farnham, who, finding his aid unnecessary, turned back again in a "huff," merely saying—as he contemplated the little corpse—"Bury that clod in some ditch; dare not to place it in consecrated ground; 'tis but a lump of clay."

Master Vernon was about to utter an indignant protest, but, knowing the law, restrained himself in time, and taking counsel of the assembled females, agreed that the little body of his King's child should be enclosed in a box, and consigned to its mother-earth at midnight, by the aid of Mother Squalls's son, who was used to work with pick and spade in the grounds nigh at hand.

This son of "Mother Squalls," ugly as base-born, but known as "Jem May" after his reputed father, and otherwise designated "the ugly cub," was a character in the neighbourhood ready for any ugly job; only five feet in stature, with a white pasty face, a bullet head, and a thatch of dark hair over his upper lip, he delighted in any transaction which savoured of mystery or concealment, and would indeed have preferred crime, nature having fashioned him in her surliest mood.

With a grunt of satisfaction at the prospect of earning a few coins, Jem May contrived to extemporise a coffin out of a small trunk, wherein, amidst the tears of three poor females—one of them a mother—the tiny corpse of a still-born princelet was deposited, and, as decently as tender hands could minister, laid out in humble state for consignment to the earth.

Between the hours of twelve and one, with a bright moon shining after the overpast storm, Master Vernon, accompanied by "the ugly cub," Jem May, bearing his little burthen under one arm, and a serviceable pick and mattock under the other, wended their silent way to the nearest churchyard, which happened to be that of Aldershot village, only one mile distant, and in which, despite all prohibition, he determined on burying the unbaptised relic of humanity, his King's son, if only a clod.

Accordingly, selecting a favourable spot immediately beneath a moderately sized yew tree, nearly facing the porch of the sacred edifice itself, full six feet deep a grave was dug, and in it as carefully as possible was lowered down the homely coffin, but without any prayer, for Master Vernon

having violated one ceremony of the Church by his present act, refrained from any second, and would have left ashes to meet ashes and earth to meet earth without further ceremony, but that as the first spade full of soil fell hollow upon the box, he bethought him of one little office which might not be in the wrong. Stripping off his cloak of Genoa velvet, he flung it down by way of a pall, muttering to himself "My Sovereign's offspring shall yet lie royally covered, if only at the cost of a poor gentleman's cloak."

This done, and the grave covered, so as to hide all appearance of its having been made, Master Vernon cast one parting glance upon the grey church tower and hastened away, followed by his unsightly companion, whose hideous grin of satisfaction at the receipt of a golden coin was in truth an ugly comment on the deed just done.

A couple of hundred years have passed on. That spreading yew tree, now a mighty patriarch, even yet overshadows that lowly grave, and if within the notice of present time that tree should become uprooted, full six feet deep may chance to be found, if earth and time yet spare a relic, the small bones of a King's child that knew not earthly pomp nor sacred rite, nor haply found its resting-place a whit less honourable than those marked by sepulchral stone, or humbler marked by arching sod, neath which "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep."

Immediately after this event Master Vernon rode over to London, where in some trepidation he communicated all facts to his Majesty, who exonerated him from all

blame, the more particularly for his having guarded the secrecy of Mistress Gwynn from the prying eyes and scandalous tongues of the neighbourhood, for, strange to tell, that secret was kept, even though six females, to say nothing of as many males, were parties to the transaction in some way or other. As a matter of course the two outriders and the two troopers who formed the escort were perfectly well informed, but being well paid also, were too wise to break faith; while Dame Grimshaw, the hard-looking but soft-headed Puritan guardian, had her own reasons for keeping silence—even if her suspicions had rebelled.

In brief space Mistress Nelly Gwynn was ready to resume her journey, for ladies at that period were hardier than now, and five days after the misadventure that little cavalcade took the road to Guildford in the same order as before, and were met at that place by an escort from London of more convenient kind, for the King was very considerate as regarded the well being of his several favourites, Mistress Nelly being at that moment the principal one.

Seven years after this event, Master Vernon, then a captain who had won laurels in a campaign against the Dutch, waited upon his Majesty the King, who promised him an advance if he would attach himself to the Court, but this our young hero declined, preferring to follow his military career, and ultimately finding both a beautiful wife and an ample position in the world without cringing to any political party whatsoever.

Once only afterwards did he see Mistress Nelly

Gwynn, who, of all the King's numerous favourites, was the best loved and most deserving. She was residing in a private lodging close to Whitehall, where the King was accustomed to visit her and to play with his little son, then six years of age, and concerning whom the following is reported, but with what truth it is impossible to vouch :—

The little fellow so troubled his Majesty with playful tricks that his mother drew him away, saying, "Come away, you little bastard ! "

"Nay," spoke the King, "don't call him by such a name ;" on which Mistress Nelly exclaimed—

"It is all the name your Majesty has given him ! "

"We will change all that," once more spoke the King, and did so, for the child was named Beauclerc, and ultimately became Duke of St. Albans, with a fair estate.

For many years Mistress Nelly Gwynn retained the favours of her Royal Master, outliving his fickle fancy for Mrs. Davis, Louise de Quarrielles, and some dozen other Court beauties, many of whom look down from the canvasses of Lely and other artists on the walls of Hampton Court.

It is recorded that on his deathbed King Charles, after partaking of the Sacrament from a Catholic priest, *and apologising for being so long in dying*, uttered, in his last moments, "DON'T LET POOR NELLY STARVE !" thereby committing her to the good will of an unpitied world, which, if it did not absolutely let her die of want, did allow her to linger in great poverty, until certain personages

in guardianship of the young Duke of St. Albans prevented a national scandal. It would be, of course, an affront to public morality if any writer should dare to eulogise a Royal courtesan as an honest woman, and yet—and yet—may she not have been a good woman instead? For is she not accredited with having been the instigator of that noblest national charity, Chelsea Hospital? And, if so, is it too much to assert that her thoughts may have been impelled thereto by the sight of that poor wooden-legged soldier, whose pitiable condition fell beneath her eyes during that evening of terror and affright, when passing through Farnham, she found her journey arrested, in woman's saddest hour of travail, at "The Fox and Hounds."

THE TRADESMAN'S DAUGHTER.

“Pudet hæc approbia nobis, et dici potuisse, et non
potuisse refelli.”

OVID, M. I.

CHAPTER I.

THE establishment of a military camp at the hitherto obscure “village” of Aldershot has done much to disabuse the civilian public of many fallacies touching “the service,” and, upon the whole, reflected great credit upon the British soldier, both in the commission and in the ranks; but still without letting in the full light of publicity on certain dark corners even yet shrouded by exclusiveness or partially veiled by reserve.

It is upon one of these half-hidden mysteries that the following narrative will be found to hinge, the date being only a little in advance of that period which brought about the abolition of purchase, under the auspices of Lord Cardwell, at which time a certain cavalry regiment was stationed at Aldershot, and quartered in the West Cavalry Block—we will call it the “Ninety-ninth Hussars.”

It must be well known to the world at large that commissioned officers in her Majesty's service are all—like civilian officers in the law—gentlemen “by Act of Parliament;” and not *merely* gentlemen, but perfectly *equal* gentlemen, the honorary colonel and the junior sub-lieutenant being equally entitled to presentation at

Court, and their wives alike eligible, with permission, by courtesy, of the Lord High Chamberlain, who is supposed to know "who is who," and admit or reject at option.

It is also, presumably, well known that there are officers in a regiment who, although gentlemen by virtue of their commissions, are frequently not exactly such within the full "meaning of the Act," to borrow a law phrase, but who are somewhat unfelicitously termed "rankers" in military parlance, having been raised from the position of sergeant or sergeant-major through simple merit and efficiency; such officers, in cavalry regiments, being the "Quarter-master," "Riding-master," and "Veterinary Surgeon," familiarly termed the "vet," besides, occasionally, others, instructors in various branches of regimental practice—even the paymaster or adjutant at times.

There are also certain officers in the service termed "non-combatants" *—the parson or chaplain, of course, the surgeons, of necessity, and some others whose technical avocations employ them elsewhere than in the attacking column; these three classes of combatants, non-combatants, and working officers forming the

* This term must be accepted with much reservation. In the British army there are no actual non-combatants in the field of action, except the surgeons and the chaplains, BUT in the instructional camp and elsewhere at home, the adjutant, quartermaster, paymaster, and instructors have quite enough to employ them without fighting imaginary foes on parade or elsewhere. The term "working officers" appearing a little "infra dig" they prefer being called "non-combatants."

commissioned staff or back-bone of every regiment in the service.

As a corollary to the above, while all the male constituents of the commissioned staff are equal in a society point of view, the female constituents are not to be rashly included, for sufficient reasons tolerably obvious, the wives of "rankers" being too frequently uneducated women, quite unfitted for society communion with the highly cultivated wives who almost exclusively form the "lady-staff," and who, by virtue of their influence over their husbands, exercise a degree of power far beyond general appreciation. Thackeray, in one of his clever novels, records somewhat like the following: "The regiment goes out in command of the Major, and the Major goes out under command of—his wife;" a slight matter, as may appear on the surface, but by no means such in a deeper sense; for is not a woman, although often at the root of mischief, still more often the incentive to a thousand acts of devotion and gallantry, which had else lacked a strong motive power?

Having thus glanced at the social constitution of the regimental system in general, it is time to note that of the "Ninety-ninth Hussars" in particular.

This noble corps, relegated to Aldershot about a dozen years ago, was under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Busby, a veteran officer of sixty years' service, who had won his laurels most deservedly, attaining his rank by slow degrees only, and without purchase; but being of no family himself, while accidentally in command of an aristocratic regiment, he confined himself strictly to the

duties of his position, and, together with his unassuming wife, mingled as little as possible with general society, his "locum tenens" in that respect being Major Bexfield, a veteran of thirty-five years old, who, being extremely rich, had purchased his every step over half-a-dozen senior captains.

Major Bexfield stood four feet eleven inches in his regimental jack-boots, but, as he was in the habit of stating, "could make himself as tall as anyone else by standing on his cash box," and this was true. If, however, the Major was short in person, he had taken measures of counterpoise by marrying a very tall wife, to wit, the Honble. Matilda Dashwood, the penniless daughter of an Irish peer, the couple being well matched—as opposites—for both were proud—the one of his money, the other of her birth.

It was a singularity of the Major's to overburthen his brother officers with presents, ostentatiously bestowed. He had presented the regiment with a "drag" and four splendid bays; he had presented the mess with an enormous salver, worth several hundred pounds, too heavy for one footman to carry, and with his name and presentation elaborately graven thereon; he had presented the senior captain's wife with a cradle of silver wirework, a fac-simile to one lately presented to the Lady Mayoress; and he had presented the junior cornet with the ugliest bull-dog in all creation, a couple of bloodhounds, and no less than three terriers, all warranted lineal descendants from the famous rat catcher, "Billy," all of which the luckless cornet was compelled to keep,

although his income reached a bare five hundred pounds beyond his pay.

As for the Honourable Mrs. Major Bexfield, no pen can do justice to her manifold qualifications as a ruler in society. Tall, handsome, and showily accomplished, it was an apparent mystery why she had allied herself as she did, but the secret lay in her love of domination. The Major's small person and large purse offered a dual realm over which she could reign as queen. Her pride was her sceptre, and "caste" one of her imperative laws, through which she hoped to govern the little community under her sway.

Of the officers composing the Ninety-ninth Hussars, the four senior captains were all married to ladies of birth and position; one lieutenant and one cornet, fortunately a rich man, were also married in their own sphere, the rest being all single, and numbering eighteen or twenty at the regimental mess.

"Place aux dames." Of the ladies who formed the "lady-staff" little need be told, except that, being "ladies" in every sense of the word, they conformed to the usages of society while tacitly under the banner of their recognised commandress, the Major's wife, who somehow or other contrived to exercise a dominion not always in accord with good taste or charitable feeling. But of this anon.

As regards the gentlemen under feminine command, they were all gentlemen, both by education and self-control; but, somehow or other, all under the influence of caste and society law, professing absolute

independence, but practising absolute obedience to forms and customs ; all, except one, in the person of a young cornet, well born and well off, who, being troubled with an over balance of modesty, was a little snubbed and a good deal laughed at accordingly, his christened name of "Augustus Muff" being a peg on which many jokes were pinned.

Concerning the regiment in general, one other little peculiarity remains to be noted, this one being not peculiar to the ninety-ninth alone. It was a "Lex non-scripta" that any officer degrading himself by marriage beneath his "caste" should immediately "sell out" or "be sent to Coventry," this latter alternative being so intolerable that the former was generally accepted as the lesser of the two, and had been lately so accepted by the senior lieutenant, who had had the audacity to marry a governess, so beautiful and so highly accomplished that the female conclave of the regiment barred her out, as well as her husband.

It was at the dismissal of parade one fine morning in June that Colonel Busby made known to the Major, who made known to the Senior Captain, who forthwith made known to every other officer in rank succeeding—rankers excepted—that a communication awaited them, *en masse*, at the Colonel's quarters one hour after lunch time, three o'clock sharp.

Great was the astonishment of all regarding the matter. What could it mean? A special order from the Lieutenant-General commanding the division, or a private communication from the Horse Guards?

Conjecture was at the highest, but obedience imperative.

The Colonel's drawing-room on the first floor of a block-end house, a handsome apartment, was found to be arranged board-room fashion ; a long table in the centre, surrounded with chairs, pen, ink, and paper being provided as for a court-martial.

A few moments after all had arrived, the Colonel presented himself, wearing a countenance as impenetrable as that of the Sphinx.

"Something up," whispered the Senior Captain, and something was "up."

After all had seated themselves, Colonel Busby at the table-head, and Major Bexfield at his right hand, an ominous silence prevailed, during which the fever of expectancy was at its highest.

At length the Colonel uprose from his chair, and spoke as follows :—

"Gentlemen,—I have a communication to make which gives me some trouble. I had intended to put it into some form of my own concocting, but after considerable thought, have elected to read the said communication, with permission of its author."

A dead silence continued to reign unbroken, until the Colonel resumed—

"You remember, gentlemen, the date of Captain Entwistle's departure on special leave, urgent private affairs."

"Certainly," responded several voices.

"Well," resumed the Colonel, "it was this day month, and his leave expires to-morrow."

"Nothing wrong happened to him, I hope," exclaimed the Senior Lieutenant.

"Something has happened," again the Colonel spoke.

"No accident, I hope?"

"Not thrown from his horse, surely, and broken his collar bone?"

"Not dead, I hope?"

"Neither of these things, but he has done something." Here the Colonel hesitated as to what should follow next in evident embarrassment.

"Surely an honourable man like Entwistle can have done nothing wrong," exclaimed the Senior Captain.

"Wrong or right, gentlemen, you must judge for yourselves; all I can tell you is that he got married." Thus saying, Colonel Busby reseated himself.

"Is that all?" exclaimed several voices, simultaneously.

"Aye all! and enough too," spoke Major Bexfield, "when you know how."

Hereupon Colonel Busby produced from his breast pocket an official looking letter, which he handed to Major Bexfield with the curt words "read it," and the Major did read it, in a sonorous voice, as follows:—

MY DEAR COLONEL BUSBY,—

I have a communication to render yourself and my brother officers, which circumstances make more convenient by letter than by word of mouth; the briefest possible form will suffice for the occasion, and must thus be rendered.

I have married a young and beautiful woman, who is highly accomplished and endowed by nature with every charm of person and mind calculated to render a man happy, but she is a tradesman's daughter, and therefore, according to the unwritten code of military society, disqualified from intercourse with the ladies of my comrade officers.

In this dilemma I feel bound to acknowledge that, while I

must feel deeply the disqualification in my own peculiar case, I cannot quarrel with the law which imposes it, but, having a deep love for my profession, and deeming cowardice *in any form* a breach of manly honour, I have elected to remain in the regiment, and to face the consequences, whatever such may be.

My object in addressing you is therefore to lay, through you, my case before my brother officers, and to acquaint them that, while I am sure no *ungentlemanly* obstacle will be thrown in my way, I will refrain from accepting their discontent in a hostile sense, believing it to be founded on a mistake which time will rectify ; also that my wife will neither seek nor shun society, having, like myself, to defend a post of danger which we hold as a post of honour against even the world in arms.

I shall therefore meet my comrades as though nothing had happened, abiding by the colours of my country, my honour, and my conscience.

I have the honour to assert myself, dear Colonel Busby,
Your Servant to Command,

REGINALD ENTWISTLE.

“Now, gentlemen, what do you think of that?” exclaimed the Major, after reading the document, and “flouncing” it down upon the table.

“I don’t know what to think,” responded one voice in a puzzled tone.

“Nor I,” echoed another. “What say you, Colonel?”
But Colonel Busby only shrugged his shoulders.

“What do you think of it yourself, Major?” cried the Senior Captain.

“It is not what I think of it,” replied Major Bexfield, “but what the ladies will think. I must consult Mrs. Bexfield.”

Mrs., the Honourable, lady in question, was consulted accordingly, but what the Honourable Mrs. Major Bexfield decided upon must be rendered in a separate chapter.

CHAPTER II.

CAPTAIN REGINALD ENTWISTLE had married a grocer's daughter, and this was the manner of it.

Six months before the commencement of this narrative he had left Aldershot to spend his Christmas leave at Leamington with some hunting friends, but while on his road, and stopping at Daventry, he bethought him of a distant connection residing close by whom it was a matter of duty to "look up," especially as this distant relative, a Dowager Countess, was one from whom he had expectations, and who was also guardian to a certain young lady in whom he was interested. He accordingly made a detour and presented himself—quite unexpectedly—to Lady Penrose at her snug little domain, "The Hollies."

Lady Penrose, a buxom and well jointured widow, was delighted to see him, and introduced him to not one young lady alone, but to two young ladies—foster sisters—both of whom were beautiful in opposite styles; but which of the two was the one he sought did not at first transpire.

Lady Penrose herself was childless, but her only sister, dying in childbed while on a visit at the Hollies eighteen years ago, had left her guardian to a little girl whom she vowed to support and educate as her own.

Fortunately it happened that a neighbouring grocer's wife was qualified to nourish the infant, and did so, in conjuncture with her own, until such time as it was thought proper to separate the little ones, bringing the young aristocrat home, and leaving the plebeian with its

humble relative ; but against this a demurrer was put in. The two infants refused to be separated, and why?—no one could tell. Perhaps it may have been through some unfathomed mystery of nature, through imbibing the same lacteal nourishment, or perhaps not, but, at all events, the fact remained. The two children, while separated, pined and pined away till they almost pined out of the world, when, as a last resource, the physician advised bringing them together again as the only means of saving their lives. This was accordingly done, little Madeline Gitton, the plebeian grocer's child, and little Elizabeth Aston, the aristocrat, sharing the same home at "The Hollies" with consent of the grocer's wife, until in course of time Lady Penrose became as fond of the grocer's child as of her own niece, and this affection being mutual, it followed that Lady Penrose finally adopted the little plebeian, by parental acquiescence, and the two foster sisters became henceforth as twins, educated and petted alike by governesses and guardian, till at the age of eighteen years Elizabeth Aston and Madeline Gitton bloomed into womanhood, the two loveliest maidens in all Warwickshire, which, to those who know that county, means a great deal indeed.

Elizabeth Aston was a brunette, tall, with dark hazel eyes, a bloom on her cheek like that of an October peach, and a figure which put the Hebe of Canova to absolute shame. Madeline Gitton was a blonde, with the stereotyped "wealth" of golden hair, the complexion of a blush rose, and the figure of a Hindoo maiden carrying a waterjar. Her head well poised, her

shoulders well thrown back, her bust well rounded, and her supple waist not all too fine for grace while yet enough for beauty of action.

Opposite in style of loveliness, the two girls were equally opposite in their mental ideas, for it was the plebeian maiden who was proud, and the aristocrat who was humble; Madeline Gitton being extremely sensitive on account of her lowly birth, while yet fierce in its defence, yielding the utmost deference to her parents, whom she constantly visited, and giving warmest love to her two brothers and one sister, whom she helped to educate during one day in every week which she dedicated to her natural home.

Elizabeth Aston, on the contrary, was all humility, all softness, all sweetness, and all submission; she did not know what pride meant, least of all pride of birth; her chosen friends, after her aunt, foster sister, and governess, were the poor people of the village, her favourite flower the lily of the valley, and her chief playmates a couple of turtle doves, whom she had taught to fly about wherever she went in loving companionship.

Educated in the strictest seclusion by their governess and a few masters called in from the neighbourhood, the two maidens had mixed with no society except at the houses of friends; of course they had never been formally "introduced," but had been always received by their neighbours on an equality goodnaturedly accorded to a couple of beautiful girls reared under the guardianship of a titled lady known to all, no thought being given to ulterior possibilities.

This little insight to society had, however, awakened in the minds of both maidens a certain kind of dreaminess concerning the future which greatly troubled the tradesman's daughter, and set her thinking. Now, when young ladies begin to think of anything beyond the present, they become dangerous, in a certain sense, if not to others, certainly to themselves, and it was thus with Madeline Gitton, who began to speculate concerning her own future. What would become of her when the halcyon days of her probation should pass away?—when her friend and companion should emerge from the obscurity of youthful training into the bright light of social elevation, thereby taking that part in the world for which she was born, and had a rightful claim to enter?

So soon as Miss Elizabeth Aston, heiress to a moderate estate, should become formally "introduced" as Lady Penrose intended, she must attract admirers, lovers, perhaps, and, as a matter of consequence, be married.

Yes, married!—become separated from her, the companion of her childhood, and then what else?

It is certainly very foolish of young ladies, not out of their teens, to harp upon the word "marriage," the consideration of which is not among "Mangnal's questions," but so it is, and probably ever will be. The thinking, too, on marriage, even with respect to one's friend and companion, often comes back to the word "self," just as the Indian toy called "boomerang" returns to the thrower who aims it at someone else.

From contemplating the possibility of marriage, as regarded her friend, Miss Madeline Gitton began to ask

herself what possibility of marriage awaited her, when she should be thrown back upon her own natural position as a mere tradesman's daughter, with the education and aspiration of one befitting a higher sphere.

Of course this was wrong, in one sense, if right in another. Wrong for any young lady to dream of marriage before having learnt what love meant ; but right to prepare herself for a life change which might otherwise break upon her with a too sudden force. Should she be compelled to return to her parents' home, which, by the bye, was now a thriving establishment, she would have to mingle with companions and visitors of a stamp much below what she was accustomed to, with young men whose ideas and aims were by no means in unison with her own ; for she had already formed her ideal of a possible helpmate who should raise her up to a better position. He must be tall, because she was of middle height only. He must be dark, because she was fair, and, if possible, a soldier, because he would help her to fight her way upward to the station she aspired to fill ; but whence he should come, and when, was all an idle dream.

Through the kindness of Lady Penrose, Madeline Gitton's only brother, a youth two years older than herself, had been educated at a public school, and through the same influence had been received as a cadet at Sandhurst College ; her two sisters had also been fairly educated at a good boarding school, and both her father and her mother had, under the influence of good times and thriving trade, become exceedingly presentable personages and looked far above their station in life—nature having

fashioned them upon her best mould, but for all this the gulf between plebeian trade and aristocratic position was one not to be bridged over, and this acknowledged fact jarred against those emotional hopes which education had fostered, and often made her very, very sad indeed, for her pride was innate while yet so peculiar as almost to contradict itself.

Lady Penrose had in contemplation to take a town house in the forthcoming winter, and had already begun to feel embarrassed concerning her adopted ward Madeline—for whom she had always intended to make some provision—when Captain Entwistle's unexpected visit suddenly brought matters to a climax.

The two young ladies, Elizabeth Aston and Madeline Gitton, were engaged on a duet at the piano when the gallant soldier was admitted, and the brief introduction of "My niece and ward" gave him to understand only that two beautiful girls were before him, but which the niece and which the ward did not transpire.

By some sympathetic attraction Captain Entwistle and Madeline Gitton sought each other's eyes, and in them saw their fate. It was a genuine case of "love at first sight," the tall dark Captain, with the massive black curly hair and heavy moustache, found his ideal opposite in the blonde maiden with the golden hair, and both felt the magnetic influence which drew them together.

As this is not by any means a love story, and as its chief event is chronicled on the title-page, it is not necessary to give the details of our hero's wooing. A few simple facts are enough, and they are these : Captain

Reginald Entwistle, six-and-twenty years of age, with a fair income and no near relative to control him, had grown somewhat tired of steeplechasing, billiard playing, and mess-room slang, and began to long for those home pleasures and that companionship which is only to be found in the marriage state ; he had even contemplated very slightly perhaps, the possibility of finding in Lady Penrose's niece an attraction towards his hopes, for he had seen her as a mere child, together with the youthful Madeline ; but then, as even now, without knowing which was which.

As a matter of course the mistake of a moment was speedily rectified, but the arrow which sped from the bow of fate, had hit the target, and the shot scored ; with what ultimate result was yet hidden in the future ; but so immediate and unmistakable was the fact that none could deny it, or fail to see with what precision the blow was struck.

Three persons were thus placed in a kind of imbroglio, or indeed four, Lady Penrose being the first to form calculations thereon, seeing at once the possibility of providing for her adopted ward in a manner to cut the Gordian knot of difficulties regarding her future destination. It was in the same light as well that Elizabeth Aston saw the probabilities of her playmate's satisfactory elevation—a pleasure greatly mitigated through the loss of her companionship. But it was to the enamoured pair that the real difficulties of the case appeared formidable, both alike having pride to contend with, although of different kinds.

Captain Entwistle at once saw his bugbear in regard to the well-known laws of exclusiveness prevailing in military society, and at first debated the expediency of "selling out," as the prudent dog is said to anticipate a kick by voluntary exit; but a deep love of his profession intervened and a sense of shame at the notion of evading danger by cowardice over-ruled all else, and he determined on braving all.

As to the lady, she was still more embarrassed, and made no scruple of avowing her mental struggles of pride against pride—of that pride which does not ape humility, but soars above it. As, however, the result has already been chronicled let it so be, and enough—Captain Reginald Entwistle, of the Ninety-ninth Hussars, left the house of Lady Penrose the affianced husband of Madeline Gitton—the wedding to come off in six months' time, with Miss Elizabeth Aston for one principal bridesmaid—and the grocer father to give away the bride.

As to Captain Entwistle's friends at Leamington, they had to hunt without him, and it is upon record that while one lover of the pigskin achieved a broken collar-bone, and one other a couple of broken ribs, the luckiest of them all gained but one poor fox's "brush," which he carried off in triumph. So that he who stayed behind and gained a lovely woman for a bride obtained, certainly, the best of it, or Fortune's frolic belies herself.

CHAPTER III.

ON the morning following his letter, Captain Entwistle, after having previously reported himself, made his appearance on parade as usual, shaking hands after a somewhat formal fashion with such as immediately came in contact with him, but it was a ceremony and nothing else.

The act of "shaking hands" has long been considered and argued on touching its value as an indicator of friendly feeling, from the presentation of a single finger to the warm and powerful grasp of redhot friendship. Clever observers have accurately and nicely indicated every gradation, except one, and that one the kind of hand shaking which responded to Captain Entwistle, for the touch he met was neither that of friendship nor absolutely freezing ceremony, but rather that of pity and commiseration—it was, in truth, accepted as such, precisely as anticipated, but yet it inflicted a pang, setting, as it were, a seal upon some mental contract which the endorser was compelled to admit as valid.

Parade being over, and the order of the day complied with, Captain Entwistle was about to seek his regimental quarters, still retained, when he was met by the young shame-faced cornet, previously named as Mr. Muff, who for the nonce appeared to have lost his hesitating manner, and addressed our hero thus, after a hearty shake of hands—

"My dear sir, allow me to be the first to congratulate

you on your marriage, and to solicit the honour of a first introduction to your wife."

This spontaneous address from one whom he had scarcely ever noticed before that time came most opportunely to calm the unrest which had taken possession of the Captain, who, nevertheless, thought it most politic to reply with some little reserve.

"Many thanks, my dear sir; but, without refusing for the present, allow me to thank you most kindly, while I propose to wait awhile pending certain arrangements which may transpire."

"Must it be so?" replied the young cornet.

"For the present—yes."

Whereupon Mr. Muff appeared as if some happy thought had come across his brain, and after some little hesitation he again spoke.

"Ah! I think you fancy a lady friend would do better service, if so, and you will let me be the first to be honoured with an introduction, I—I—I have a dear little sister who will come to see me in a few days, and she will accompany me."

"Thanks, a thousand times. Come with me now, and suffer me to appreciate your friendship as it deserves."

With this understanding they parted, but only to meet again in the evening, when a well-appointed pony chaise conveyed them to Laurel Villa, a sequestered residence which the Captain had secured, near Upper Hale, where a *recherché* dinner awaited them, presided over by the Captain's wife.

Having mainly disposed of the gentlemen appertain-

ing to this narrative, it is now the ladies' turn to show their mettle, or rather their metal, whether as gold, silver, copper, or steel, the latter being imminent, judging from the cruel light which flickered forth from the eyes of the Honourable Mrs. Major Bexfield, as she assumed her place as president of the conclave held at her quarters, for the proposed ostracism of the regimental interloper, Mrs. Captain Entwistle.

Long and stormy was the meeting, held under lock and key, of six or seven irate females, whose dignity, if not at stake, was to be upheld by force of arms feminine, but not the less deadly, for reputations' sake.

Mrs. Colonel Busby, be it told, was not of the party thus constituted to regulate the board of green cloth debates on this occasion, being somewhat timid, as well as greatly in awe of the Major's honourable yet bellicose wife. Had she any will of her own, she would have welcomed any new comer in the regimental little world with pleasure, but she had no will of her own, and the Colonel, her husband, was glad to see her neutral in all matters concerning the etiquette of her position. So that the ladies before enumerated had it all their own way, but as nothing publicly transpired, the tactics agreed on between them can only be gathered from the result as became speedily seen.

Major Bexfield was rich, even ostentatiously so, and it was therefore no surprise to the regiment when a splendid ball was announced to take place in the mess-room, where all expenses would be defrayed by the Major.

Laurel Villa, the residence Captain Entwistle had engaged for his newly-made wife, was a somewhat extensive mansion, surrounded by trees, and having a coach-house, with stabling for several horses, a much larger place than absolutely necessary, but the only one available at the time wanted ; for the moment there were but a couple of milk-white ponies occupying the stables, and a low basket carriage capable of seating four persons, and in this it was the bride's delight for the first few days of her residence to explore the scenery of the neighbourhood, attended by one liveried servant only in the back seat.

On one of these occasions, while driving past Anglesea House, her ponies were startled by the abrupt exit of three mounted officers from the entrance gate, and swerved from their course so as to threaten danger. One of these three was Cornet Muff, who instantly dismounted, and, rushing to the ponies' heads, brought the animals to a standstill before the servant could descend from his perch behind. A little scene then ensued, Mrs. Captain Entwistle thanking her gallant rescuer, whose deferential bow and general demeanour bore evidence of his deep respect, but the other two gentlemen—they were the senior captains—neither inclined their heads nor otherwise took notice, seeing that all danger was averted, but leisurely sauntered on, thinking their companion would overtake them, instead of which they were somewhat astonished to find that he did not so do, but cantered on beside the pony carriage in the direction of Hale ; the truth being that his former introduction gave

him the privilege of acquaintanceship to see the lady safe home after the fright she had encountered, while she, noting the utter absence of sympathetic courtesy on the part of his companions, did not fail to score the incident itself as "cut number one;" number two following the next day afterwards, as follows:—

Mr. Muff (it is not the fashion to place a military title before the name of any gentleman under the rank of captain) had been a second time invited to dinner at Laurel Villa, and the little party of three were enjoying themselves over an excellent dessert, when a post letter was delivered, the reading of which by Captain Entwistle appeared to disturb him somewhat.

"Cut number two," he exclaimed, handing the missive to his wife, who, after flushing up to the roots of her hair, passed the letter on to Mr. Muff, with a request that he too should read it.

The contents of the letter was a "card" merely, that card being a ticket or voucher for the forthcoming "ball," requesting the honour of Captain Entwistle's company, &c., &c., but making no mention of his wife, the existence of whom was thereby ignored.

This "cut number two" was rendered the more insulting through having been made through the post instead of, as etiquette required, by special messenger.

"Suffer me to answer it," entreated Mrs. Entwistle. But "No," responded that gentleman, "it is my business to respond, and I will do so."

"Captain Entwistle has the honour to return the enclosed voucher to the Honourable Mrs. Major Bexfield, feeling

assured that his name must have been placed by mistake for that of some more fortunate individual."

This missive, despatched by servant, reached its destination of course, and, being as unanswerable as polite, failed not to effect its purpose.

As to the ball itself it was an utter failure, one half of the invited having discovered that ill health or domestic necessity compelled them to decline. Either the Hon. Mrs. Major Bexfield's generalship was in fault, or the troops under her command were beginning to mutiny. Certain it is that a report began to spread touching the exceeding beauty of a certain lady who drove a couple of milk-white ponies, and the gentlemen, at least, were beginning to ask each other if the war of "caste" was altogether as dignified as had hitherto been considered; but, as they were still under feminine control, they dared not openly rebel.

It was a few days only after this incident that Mr. Muff prevailed on his sister to pay him a visit. He at first intended taking apartments for the young lady and her maid, but at the solicitation of Mrs. Entwistle she was welcomed, most affectionately, to a home at Laurel Villa, and proved a great acquisition to the young bride. She was, like her brother, very fair, with light hair, and a tall, elegant figure; scarcely, perhaps, beautiful, but graceful in the extreme, highly accomplished, and devotedly attached to her brother. A firm friendship was speedily cemented between the two young ladies, who together disported themselves in the little pony carriage to their hearts' content, winning the admiration

of an observant neighbourhood, alike with rich and poor, but very particularly on both sides in consequence of an industriously circulated report, not exactly trouble, concerning the "scandal" brought about in H.M.'s 99th Hussars, whereby the high dignity of a "crack" regiment was insulted, &c., &c. ; a weapon of alleged "scandal," which somehow or other cut with a double edge—some praising the Captain's "pluck," others solemnly deploring the loss of prestige which must inevitably attach to an illustrious corps on the event of a non-expulsion of its offending member.

Meanwhile an under-current of events made its way through the regiment itself, wherein the female element took its own peculiar way, headed of course by the Honourable Mrs. Major Bexfield, who in her bitter animosity of "caste" seemed to forget that the best evidence of positional worth is its disdain of all petty meanness ; her conspicuous failure with regard to the ball serving to exasperate her beyond all decent bounds, so much so indeed that her very closest adherents began to think of falling off from their allegiance in consequence—one especial cause having an influence of its own in the following respect.

The married officers of a cavalry regiment almost invariably reside out of quarters, excepting the colonel and major, whose allotted rooms are sufficient for their accommodation. Now, it so happened that in the first heat of irritation at the demerits of Captain Entwistle, the ladies of the offended clique so pestered their lords with requisitions to aid and abet them in the coming struggle

that, without exactly dreading a series of "Caudle" lectures, they singularly enough took to absenting themselves from the "family mess," and took to joining the "regimental mess" a little oftener than at "guest parties," as heretofore, thereby placing their better halves at some disadvantage touching family comfort. Married ladies have very sharp eyes, and the sharp eyes of Mrs. the Honorable Major's wife saw through that little subterfuge, and somewhat cleverly resolved on amendment.

A clever cynic has once described matrimony as a "domestic oligarchy mitigated by puddings," and the observation is terribly true. The "puddings" which the wives of the three or four senior captains concocted for their husbands were coaxing words, smiling faces, pleasant company, cheerful music, unlimited cigars, and *a total absence of all irritating topics*, which several components, enacting the part of raisins, currants, and spice, go very far indeed towards rendering the matrimonial pudding both pleasant and digestible, as well as greatly to be recommended for general family use.

It was by such "puddings" as these that most of the ladies in question brought their husbands back to allegiance, all save one, the Senior Captain's wife, who, leaguering herself with the Honourable Mrs. Major Bexfield, kept the little Major himself at fever heat of animosity against what they jointly termed "the enemy."

Meanwhile a full report on the state of affairs had reached Lady Penrose and Miss Aston, who, feeling generously indignant, meditated some little plan of their own for the rectification of their protege's predicament.

A month had passed over. Mrs. Captain Entwistle and her friend Miss Muff continued their pleasant mode of life and their pony carriage exercise, in the course of which Miss Muff, being known as the sister of an officer not disqualified by a misalliance, received the salutations of gentlemen who dared not pass her unheeded, especially as the lady in question made a very particular point of arresting^a their attention with a power of malicious enjoyment at their discomfiture, which only certain ladies possess, while yet not overstepping the bounds of good breeding. "My friend Mrs. Captain Entwistle," she would invariably assert, whereupon the gentlemen thus introduced would raise their hats or otherwise respond if in uniform with a half reluctant courtesy, which provoked the hearty laughter of both ladies when the backs of their cavaliers were turned.

Upon the gentlemen thus forced to "bend the knee of contrition" the effect was equivocal, half in shame of their own exclusive laws, and half in anger of being compelled to break them, even in so slight a matter; they could not avoid making comments and endeavouring to sound each other, fishing for opinions touching the manliness of [warring upon the sensibilities of women in general, and pretty women in particular, who were both accomplished and amiable, although "not born in the purple" of "society."

It was somewhat after [this manner of thought that the two gentlemen in question pursued their converse after parting from the ladies, whose beauty formed their common praise, leading to certain other remarks.

"Lovely women, both," exclaimed one, "but that sister of Muff's a trifle fast; am not quite sure she was not laughing at us."

"Neither am I," responded his companion. "Her friend, however, was in better form, and ten times more beautiful."

"Lucky fellow, that Entwistle," exclaimed the second Senior Captain, "to gain such a sweet woman for his wife, in one sense of the word at least."

"A sweet woman enough," responded his companion; "as sweet as sugar candy."

"If you mean that as a joke upon her father's occupation I am glad we are alone."

"Of course it is a joke, and we are alone; but, joking apart, how are we to get out of this scrape, for we have recognised her—and our wives? Eh?"

"Our wives? Ah! There's the rub."

What conclusion the gentlemen might have arrived at must be left to the future, but, so far as the ladies are concerned, Mrs.—the Honourable—Major Bexfield was determined that the war should continue in full force, but it is also due to her that the reader should know she had but one coadjutor, whose spleen equalled her own in the degree of animosity evinced at Captain Entwistle's conduct; this was the wife of the Senior Captain, who hoped to stand in the Major's shoes (or boots) when he (the Major) stepped in those of the Colonel, it being pretty well established between them that the sum of eight thousand pounds stood on the books of a certain banker in Craig's Court for a certain purpose.

The Honourable Mrs. Major Bexfield and her chosen friend therefore took upon themselves the task of either driving Captain Entwistle out of the regiment, or of making both him and his wife as uncomfortable as woman's wit could devise. The following conversation between the two will suffice to suggest the *modus operandi* of the pair :—

"They say the minx is pretty, red and white, like a wax doll, with yellow hair to match, and can play the 'Battle of Prague' on the piano. I wonder what Captain Entwistle could see in such an exhibition, and he a gentleman too," exclaimed the Major's wife.

"Perhaps she had money," replied the Captain's "lady." "Her father, being a grocer, is perhaps worth a plum."

"And serves behind the counter in an apron—horrible, horrible !"

"A miserable snob, most likely; perhaps only five feet high, with a short pipe in his mouth, and a pen stuck behind his ear."

"As to his height," said Mrs. Major Bexfield, who was a trifle sensitive on that point, "it don't matter, but he must be a wretched object to own relationship with. I should like to see him in Aldershot side by side with his precious son-in-law."

"And his old woman, too, for she must be a dowdy; takes in washing, perhaps."

"A low lot altogether. To think of such scum daring even to look upon their superiors otherwise than with a receipt in hand for goods sold and delivered."

"Cannot we hit upon some plan to bring ridicule on them? If I only knew where the man lived I would give him an order for figs, or treacle, or candles, and make him bring them himself."

"He lives too far off; at Coventry or Daventry, or——"

"Coventry? It is *only* proper Entwistle should be sent there. We sent Thompson there for marrying a governess, and he was forced to sell out."

"True, and Entwistle must do likewise. I, for my part, will do my best."

"And I my worst in the cause, except ——"

"Except what?"

"Except anything unbecoming a lady."

"Anything unbecoming a fiddlestick! Nonsense. There is nothing too mean for such a purpose; we must forget we are ladies while combating such a mean antagonist as a grocer's ill-conditioned child. When you crush a reptile it is with the foot."

"True, figuratively speaking; still I should not like to do anything very shabby."

"I am not so particular, if the means come within my way; my rank in society will protect me in all things."

"As you will; lead, and I follow."

A few days after this the little party of four at Laurel Villa had just finished a cosy dinner, and were enjoying themselves in pleasant converse, when a sharp summons from the outer bell announced an arrival of some sort, and the entrance of a domestic, bearing on a salver the well-known buff envelope of the Post Office, announced "a telegram."

"Boy waits an answer."

With hurried and somewhat trembling hands—for a telegram generally excites trepidation—the buff envelope was opened, and its contents read with the utmost astonishment.

From Joseph Gitton, Daventry, to Reginald Entwistle, Aldershot.

Greatly alarmed at the terrible news ; wife and self will be with you by earliest train.

"What the devil does this mean ?" cried the Captain, forgetful of conventionalities. "Tell the boy to wait."

"Something must have occurred. I trust nothing is wrong with Lady Penrose," exclaimed Mrs. Entwistle. "Let us send return telegrams to both."

In absolute bewilderment as to what might be wrong, messages were sent off, and nothing remained but to await, and the little party broke off abruptly, Mr. Muff returning to quarters.

By the arrival of the twelve o'clock train next morning, Captain Entwistle and his wife awaited their expected guests in much anxiety, expecting only Mr. and Mrs. Gitton ; but were overwhelmed with astonishment at finding not only them, but also Lady Penrose, accompanied by Miss Aston, all four of whom seemed equally astonished at finding themselves received in person by Mrs. Entwistle, at least.

"What ! alive and well," they exclaimed with one voice, after which a scene of joy, perplexity, and congratulation ensued, the entire party making their way to Laurel Villa, where such explanations as were possible

took place—Mr. Gitton, a fine portly man of fifty years, and his stout good-humoured wife, entering upon their story to this effect: A telegram had reached them on the evening before, which they produced, amid the greatest surprise, and even horror.

From Captain Entwistle, Aldershot, to Joseph Gitton, Daventry.

"Mrs. E. dying—premature birth of twins—come by return train if you wish to see your daughter alive.

"A vile hoax," shrieked the Captain's wife.

"Worse! a dastardly crime," exclaimed the Captain, "and one which I will give a hundred pounds to unmask."

Scarcely had this brief outburst occurred when Mrs. Captain Entwistle, overcome by the horror which this outrageous slur upon her wifely fame hinted, however palpably unjust, swooned away, and had to be removed to her chamber, accompanied by Lady Penrose and her ward, leaving the two gentlemen to compare notes and seek explanation. All that presented itself was the fact that the telegram arrived at Daventry in the usual course, and was answered immediately without reference to the iniquitous impossibility of its being entirely true. That their child was ill alone seemed enough; and that much being immediately told to Lady Penrose, led to the circumstance of her immediate departure also, but only a short time in advance of her intention, which had been decided on long previously, as a mode of giving countenance to her protégé.

This very remarkable circumstance, therefore, came

to serve its part in the programme of events, as will be found to ensue.

We will pass over the mingled feelings of gratification at the meeting, and of indignant horror at the wicked malice which had brought such about.

Laurel Villa was, luckily enough, sufficient for the accommodation of all, and a day of sorrowful omen closed upon a company of happy friends—happy in all things except the mystery of its origin, which Captain Entwistle determined to investigate, or at least would have so done but that Mr. Gitton, with sound practical common sense, put his veto on the resolve.

“Let us keep the matter quiet,” he observed, “for the regiment’s honour as well as your own; depend on it the secret will leak out all the sooner for not being too eagerly sought.”

His advice was looked on as both wise and safe—Mrs. Entwistle feeling doubtful of her husband’s power to restrain his indignation within cautious bounds. It was, therefore, decided on to keep silence until further particulars should throw light on the mystery, and the Gittons, husband and wife, elected to return home before their visit could be made a subject for observation.

This being done, Lady Penrose and her niece determined on remaining guests at the villa, with the intention of lending the full force of their aristocratic position towards the establishment of their friends.

“The General in Command is an old sweetheart of mine,” Lady Penrose intimated, “and will lend me a helping hand for the sake of old times.”

Notwithstanding his promise to keep the affair of the infamous telegram quiet, Captain Entwistle could not resist a desire to learn something, and accordingly questioned the telegraph clerk, but he only knew that the recognised "form" had been placed in his hands by one of the boys engaged to deliver messages. After a little trouble this boy was found, and asserted that he had received it, already written, from a tall lady in the street, who gave him a shilling to pay for it, and a threepenny "bit" for himself.

Knowing well the animosity borne him by the Major's wife, our hero had little difficulty in guessing who the tall lady was, but still marvelled at the downright criminal meanness of such a transaction on the part of an educated female, who, in her prerogative of ideal caste as a social barrier against low presumption, committed the foul error of unmitigated vulgar spleen, by way of evincing her own superiority.

Meanwhile, the society of the regiment itself was fast becoming one of illiberal partisanship. A few of the gentlemen who had seen our heroine, and felt the influence of her beauty, began to think that Captain Entwistle had not only a fair excuse, but that he was doing knightly duty in combating popular assumption so far as he was concerned, and two, at least, of the married men began to withdraw from the compact entered into with their wives, two of whom also began to waver in their allegiance to the Major's wife. Altercations took place between various members of the hitherto friendly communion, and appeals made which were not responded to on

several occasions, leading to such diversity of opinion as went nigh to a severance of friendship.

Apart from all of these unpleasant facts, Mrs. Colonel Busby held entirely aloof, as also did the Colonel himself, who, while meditating retirement from his regiment, wished for nothing except peace and quiet. Still, he could not shut his eyes to the fact that a want of unison among those under his command was fast becoming a scandal, and touched the social reputation of the corps, the more especially as his own helpmate was credited or discredited with being the chief disturber of peace, which was utterly untrue.

Mr. Muff, who enacted, *ex-officio*, the championship of our heroine, succeeded in making many converts to her cause, dilating on her beauty, her accomplishments, and her amiability till his comrades one after another yielded up their prejudices, and solicited the honour of an introduction, which Captain Entwistle uniformly refused, on the plea that until all were of one mind his wife's position must remain unrecognised for her own pride's satisfaction.

These concessions, coming to the knowledge of the Honourable Mrs. Major Bexfield, drove that lady almost into frenzy—she went to the length of suggesting to the little warrior, her husband, that he should call the Captain out; but to this the Major objected, as contrary to the law of the land in the first place, and in the second as contrary to the law of policy, insomuch as, even when standing upon his cash-box, he could not reach the elevation of five feet two inches.

Thus, driven to her last barricade, she at length suffered her animosity to overlap all bounds of discretion; even to the extent of somewhat more than rashness—she determined on insulting her enemy, for such she deemed Mrs. Captain Entwistle, in a way such as must eventuate a climax.

Thus, full primed with animosity of the most vicious kind, she further armed herself with pens, paper, and ink—not for the first or even second time—and moreover, quite forgetting that she was a lady, concocted the following precious document :—

The Honourable Mrs. Major Bexfield, having determined not to countenance the wife of Captain Entwistle as a fitting associate in her Majesty's Regiment, the Ninety-ninth Hussars, but still mindful of the duties belonging to her station, has arrived at the conclusion of charitably extending her patronage to Mrs. Entwistle's father in the grocery line of business.

Mrs. Entwistle will therefore be so good as to order her father, Mr. ———, to forward every week—

One pound of tea at two shillings,
Three pounds of sugar at sixpence,
One pound of coffee at eighteen-pence,
And a bar of soap—

To the Major's Quarters of the 99th Hussars.

Having succeeded in inditing this cutting insult, she indulged in a hysterical laugh, and began to consider how the missive could be delivered in the way most calculated to inflict pain. To send it by ordinary post would not be enough, because it might be opened and read without witnesses to enjoy its effect. What then should be the mode? A private messenger delivering it would probably be kicked out. How then? She must

consider. As for its effect or consequences, she did not care a rush—Captain Entwistle could not make public the circumstance without publishing his own shame, he could not challenge a lady to mortal combat, and if the incident only led to the Captain's "selling out" so much the better—her object will have been gained.

For a long time she was puzzled, but at length a happy idea occurred. Directly opposite Laurel Villa there resided a single young lady of sixty-two years; an arrant gossip and an inveterate lover of scandal. She had a slight acquaintance with this lady, whom she thoroughly detested—no matter, she would write her an invitation to dine, and enclose the two letters in wrong envelopes, so that the spinster should receive that of her opposite neighbour, and *vice versa*. Of course both of the two "vis-a-vis" would exchange missives, with apology, and the fact of Mrs. Captain Entwistle being the daughter of a grocer would travel all over the neighbourhood in less than twenty-four hours. A magnificent triumph for the daughter of a peer over the daughter of a plebeian !!!

The effect of this little stratagem was, however, different from that expected. The two epistles were duly delivered by the evening post, and reached their destination just as the party at Laurel Villa were seated at table.

That received by Mrs. Entwistle, being evidently mis-directed, was sent over to the maiden lady opposite with polite apologies and an explanation; but that received by the other lady was a puzzle which took her some little time to guess at, and was only in part understood when

the other missive reached her. Quite suddenly the truth made itself apparent, and at once filled her with the utmost indignation that one of her own sex, and a lady into the bargain, should so far demean herself as to descend from the position of an honourable woman to a fiendish vixen.

Seeing at once through the transparent artifice she determined on thwarting it to the best of her power, and for this purpose immediately donned her walking costume, and taking her way to Laurel Villa, sent in her card with a request for an immediate interview with Mrs. Captain Entwistle.

This being accorded, the two ladies became friends on the instant, for the ancient spinster who had been falsely accused of scandal loving was, in truth, a kind-hearted and honourable woman, whose eccentricities were wholly on the side of female chivalry, while her moderate fortune was more than half enlisted in behalf of the poor. As is frequently the case with single ladies of a certain, or uncertain, age possessing means, she cared very little for the opinion of "Mrs. Grundy" so long as she kept her own without the reproach of conscience, and was even permitted certain liberties of speech and action not usually accorded.

Full of indignation at the thought of being made the medium of an insult, she determined on retorting, and so, possessing herself of both letters, made her way early next morning to the Hon. Mrs. Major Bexfield's quarters, and boldly accused that lady of having intentionally misdirected the two documents, which she

immediately flung on the floor and stamped upon with a force of pedal rhetoric calculated to impress the meanest capacity, but which only served to exasperate without making ashamed.

The ladies then parted, without exchanging "au revoir," the one to cement a friendship oddly begun, the other to brood on further plans of insult, in revenge for having hitherto miscarried.

And now to Lady Penrose, who, we have before intimated, meditated some scheme of her own for the amelioration of her protégé's position in society. Sir ——, then in command of the division, had been her admirer, and was still her friend. To him she went, without communicating her plans to the Captain, and, being accorded an interview, explained the predicament in which her friends were placed.

It is not necessary to detail what occurred during a long conversation, but its result may be gathered from the following—

"You ask me, Lady Penrose, to confer upon your friend some official post which will place him in authority. Unluckily, I cannot do this—every post is filled up, my 'aides-de-camp' are all chosen, I have no patronage vacant. I am a widower, with no female relative to control my household whereby to afford introduction, but, unless I greatly mistake, your friend Captain Entwistle need not long wait for his wife's advancement, as I have only this morning received intelligence from India which closely affects him, although he himself may be still ignorant of it."

"Indeed! Pray, may I know what it is?"

"Certainly. Is not Lord Belcarris, your Ladyship's second cousin, great uncle to Captain Entwistle?"

"Yes, his only son being now in India, major in a native regiment, the Gourkas."

"Was, not is, for he died one month ago, and if I mistake not, your friend is next heir to the title."

"Great Heaven! yes—when the Earl dies—you afflict me with the news, at the same time that it does me a service. I never beheld either the Earl or his son, and cannot, therefore, assume any particular regret. Captain Entwistle shall know of this immediately on my return."

Thus ended the interview, and Lady Penrose, while on her return journey to Laurel Villa, pondered whether or not it might be wise to give the information she had received. Deciding ultimately on keeping silence, pending eventualities, she inquired if her niece and Mrs. Entwistle were both within, but received for answer that Mrs. Entwistle was not at home, and that Miss Aston was engaged in the drawing-room with Mr. Muff.

Slightly taken aback with this information, but not exactly knowing why, she entered the room without any preliminary caution, to find her niece very diligently plying her crochet needles at one extremity of a tolerably large settee, and Mr. Muff diligently stroking his blond moustache at the further end, both of them in apparent surprise at the interruption.

Seating herself between the two, *sans ceremonie*, she questioned the gentleman relative to some trivial matter, but while so doing was surprised to observe one of

her niece's glittering earrings attached to his somewhat bushy whiskers. Detaching it adroitly with her jewelled finger, she exclaimed

"Why, Mr. Muff! Is it a new fashion among the military to wear earrings?"—holding up the article in question.

On hearing which, and immediately recognising her own property, Miss Aston uttered a little lady-like exclamation, and, with her cheeks the colour of a new-blown peony, left the room in hurried confusion, with the trembling Mr. Muff to give whatever explanation he could.

Now Mr. Augustus Muff, a cornet in her Majesty's regiment, the 99th Hussars, was a gentleman in every respect, one of good family; moreover a tolerably rich gentleman with good expectations.

What it was exactly which he told Lady Penrose with regard to the trifle in question, matters not; but when, after a two hours' explanation, he uprose to take his leave, it was with a happy countenance and an elastic step that he encountered his sister on the threshold—his sister, who had only just then been made a confidant of by the loser of that earring which had brought about an unexpected avowal.

Several days elapsed before any further incident occurred. The Honourable Mrs. Major Bexfield had apparently concocted no further plot; and the happy little family party, consisting of Lady Penrose, Captain Entwistle, Mr. Muff, and the other three ladies were enjoying their dessert when the evening post arrived,

bringing to Captain Entwistle not a telegram this time, but a large legal-looking envelope, sealed with a huge black seal, and containing evidently some communication of consequence.

"From Scotland," was the exclamation. And from Scotland it was, coming from the solicitor of Lord Belcarris, giving intelligence of the old lord's death from the sudden shock of hearing that his only son had died in India, having succumbed to jungle fever while tiger shooting. Captain Entwistle, as heir to the Earl's title and estate, was called on to give his commands touching the funeral, and to visit Scotland at his earliest convenience, &c., &c.

"Urgent family affairs" was sufficient in request for "leave," and while the Captain, now Earl of Belcarris, performs the duties of his newly-acquired station, we will take the opportunity of reporting the changes which immediately ensued in her Majesty's regiment, the 99th Hussars, consequent upon the retirement of Lieut.-Colonel Busby, which took place on the day of our hero's departure, when it was rumoured that the sum of eight thousand five hundred pounds had changed hands, and that Lieut.-Colonel Bexfield succeeded to Lieut.-Colonel Busby, who retired.

This important event had been the work of the Honourable Mrs. Major Bexfield, and yet had nearly missed its aim, for the Major, to tell an ugly truth, had made up his mind to "sell out" rather than pursue his course of military ambition any further. He was tired of the restrictions on his personal liberty which such a life

entailed, and moreover knew himself to be absolutely disqualified by reason of his never having troubled himself to learn the duties of his profession beyond such as forced themselves on his notice. But his imperious lady insisted. She loved power and position; as the wife of a colonel in command she could exercise dominion over the lady staff of the regiment, and make her dependents as miserable as she chose, with a very particular view to the ostracism of such as she condescended to dislike. Major Bexfield had no option but to obey. He paid his money with somewhat of a grimace, but accepted his position in due time; and while standing on his cash-box, in a pair of high-heeled jack-boots, fancied himself at least six inches taller than his wont.

On our hero's return to his regimental duties, he received the congratulations of his comrades with a generous acceptance, and no reserve, having long ago taken into charitable consideration the peculiarity of the case. Even to Colonel Bexfield's shake of the hand he cordially responded; he knew the little warrior was under petticoat government, and pitied him in consequence. But while according to the gentlemen all friendly intercourse, he was firm in rejecting all overtures for introduction to Lady Belcarris until, as he gave all to understand, she should have been presented at Court.

It was twelve months before that ceremony could be performed, after the year of mourning had expired, when the Countess of Belcarris and Mrs. Augustus Muff were both presented by Lady Penrose, and excited universal admiration by their beauty.

On the morning following this event, when the "Newspaper Gazette" was placed on her table, the Honourable Mrs. Colonel Bexfield favoured her husband and the domestic in waiting with a veritable scene.

"She presented to the Queen! That woman, a grocer's child! Monstrous! What is the world coming to?" With this, the honourable lady dashed down her beautiful Dresden coffee cup, and starting from her seat marched to and fro like a tragedy queen for several minutes, after which she recorded a vow, a terrible vow, which, had the Lord High Chamberlain only heard, would have made that noble functionary tremble in his shoes.

"But I will be revenged! For two pins only I would never visit her Majesty again!"

It is to be hoped that neither her Majesty nor the Lord Chamberlain heard of this vindictive threat, or if they did nothing very terrible ensued, for, like the Bishop's congregation in the "Jackdaw of Rheims," neither felt "one penny the worse."

Shortly after this event, Miss Muff found a protector for life in the person of a gallant captain, not of the 99th Hussars, and the Earl of Belcarris resigned his commission, greatly to the satisfaction of the Honourable Mrs. Colonel Bexfield, and in six months from that period, the regiment was somewhat unexpectedly ordered on foreign service, its destination being India, where it is to be hoped that Lieut.-Colonel Bexfield would *suddenly* acquire that amount of knowledge which would throw lustre on the British arms as completely as

if he had fitted himself for his position by previous merit.

"So the regiment goes out in command of Colonel Bexfield," observed one military "swell" to a companion.

"Yes. And the Colonel goes out under command of HIS WIFE," replied his friend.

"Poor fellow. Poor fellow!"

HIS WHISKERS: OR, THE BARBER-FIEND.

A ROMANCE OF MILITARY LIFE.

“Cantharides, or Spanish-fly, is the drawing-principle of our celebrated pomade,” &c., &c.

CHAPTER I.

SUB-LIEUTENANT FITZGAMMON, of the Hundred and Tenth “Light Bobs,” was as poor as a rat—though why a rat should be taken as a symbol of poverty is somewhat irrelevant—seeing that a rat, by simply applying its mouth to the end of its own tail, can make *both ends meet*, which Sub-Lieutenant Fitzgammon could not.

Our hero was a gentleman, every inch of him. The youngest son of a younger brother, all his family could do for him was to buy a commission, and allow him an income of £40 per annum, payable in quarterly sums of ten pounds, so that we are fully justified in asserting that he was as poor as any rat holding a military commission could possibly be.

When we assert beyond this that he was a gentleman, we mean that he never did an ungentlemanly action—never told a lie, never ran into debt (except on one occasion, to be noted hereafter), and, above all, *paid his tailor on the instant*.

He had, however, some peculiarities of his own, both mental and personal. Mentally, he had a horror of

being thought a fortune-hunter, although a rich wife, if attainable, would have been a great desideratum ; and, personally, he was the possessor of the finest pair of WHISKERS in the whole habitable globe.

Six feet two inches in his patent leathers, his features weremanly and expressive, but his whiskers were simply divine. Commencing immediately beneath his cheekbone, they flowed downward in a dense, curly, sable volume, beautifully shading off towards the side, and descending adown his bronzed face nigh upon eight inches below the chin, soft and silky, yet firm and impenetrable to light—the very *beau ideal* of hirsute appendages according to feminine appreciation.

Our Sub-Lieutenant, although only twenty-two years of age, had met in society half a dozen, at least, of young ladies possessed of fortunes, but they were all ugly—if such a term can be applied to any feminine personage owning the usual distribution of limbs and features—and, being ugly, would subject any approaching aspirants to the imputation of being fortune-hunters, so he avoided them all ; but at last one young lady, possessing a fortune of many thousand pounds, together with personal attractions of singular fascination, appeared, and his opportunity lay before him.

It was at the Aldershot race ball that he met his fate. Major O'Leary, of the Connaught Rangers, who officiated as M.C., introduced him as Lieutenant Fitzgammon to Miss Lydia Moneybags. “Miss Lydia Moneybags—Lieutenant Fitzgammon.” So they danced together, not once only, but as many times as etiquette allowed.

The attraction was mutual. He adored golden hair, peach-blossom cheeks, rose-bud mouths, voluptuous eyes, and sylph-like figure—she adored whiskers !

If there is such a thing in philosophy as magnetic influence, it certainly declared itself in the present instance. All Fitzgammon's scruples vanished, and all Miss Moneybags's feminine bashfulness became a thing of the past within the short two hours of their mutual acquaintance.

It was after their seventh waltz that our hero and heroine sat together on a secluded chaise-lounge in one of the ante-rooms ; the Lieutenant had not as yet screwed his courage up to the striking point of asking the lady's residence or condition, but Major O'Leary had previously "nudged" him with a friendly poke in the ribs, and "Now, my boy, is your chance ! Cash, and lots of it." So that he knew she was rich, and saw that she was beautiful, almost too beautiful for the hopes of a poor Sub-Lieutenant. Just as he was about to signify his desire for the honour of further acquaintance, he observed that she dropped her handkerchief in a manner which was suspiciously accidental, and of course it was his duty to pick it up, which he did, but, singularly enough, while restoring the perfumed and delicate trifle, there happened to remain on the floor an equally delicate trifle in the shape of an address card, which he was equally bound to restore, but which the lady, with an arch look, refused to take back, saying, "Keep it, if you like."

Such a hint and such a side-glance combined were

enough for our Sub-Lieutenant, and eventually resulted in a communication from the lady that she was the ward of her uncle, a retired banker, whose nephew and heir was a certain captain in our hero's own regiment, whence came the invitation to the present ball.

What further communication took place is unnecessary to tell, but it was certainly understood that our hero should pay an early visit to Cheltenham, with a view to ulterior considerations, and thus the eventful ball came to an end.

Captain Montague Bosh—the nephew of Miss Moneybags's uncle—was the exact antithesis of our hero, for though as brave a soldier as ever lived, he was neither tall nor handsome, and, above all, exhibited no whiskers of any kind whatever.

He was a light-haired man—very much freckled, and although he did contrive to establish by constant shaving a slight, downy moustache, just enough “to swear by,” he could never raise a crop of whisker worth the ordinary reaping-hook, and this singularity was a terrible trial to his manhood. He had spent a small fortune on bear's-grease and Rowland's Macassar oil, but without avail. He had tried “Mrs. Allen's far-famed hair restorer” with the like result ; even Mr. Ross's celebrated pomade, described as containing cantharides or Spanish fly, resulted in nothing. But at last he had recourse to an experiment—knowing that Spanish fly *had* wonderful drawing powers, and believing that whisker roots undoubtedly lay under the skin of his face, he thought that Mr. Ross must have failed in mixing up sufficient of that ingredient

in his nostrum—wherefore he, the Captain, would purchase a small quantity of cantharides on his own account and mix it with some ordinary bear's-grease, cut out a portion of diachylon plaister exactly the size and shape of the desired whisker, tie it on his face at bedtime, secure it with a bandage—then go to sleep quietly.

But, alas ! although he did go to sleep for an hour or so, he awoke at a little past midnight in horrible pain. His face was on fire—he jumped out of bed, rung for his man, lighted his lamp, and tore the bandages from his face in eager haste to see—what?—a red patch on both sides, exactly the shape he had cut out for his whiskers. He flung the offending unguents on the floor, ordered his man to bring warm water and some lint, wiped off a portion of the mixture, and once more tied up his unfortunate cheeks in bandages of simple linen—then retired to bed—but not again to sleep, for this time, while even yet his face was in terrible pain, his feet began to torment him after the same manner as his face ; in half an hour matters became worse, and he was in absolute torture. Ringing once more for his man, he threw off the bed-clothes, and on examining his feet, discovered that he had stepped on the discarded whisker salve, which had attached itself to the soles of his feet, hence the misery of his position. Tearing them off he went to bed once more.

Next day, Captain Montague Bosh was reported on the sick list, and for many days afterwards his “company” knew him not.

The surgeon who was called in from Aldershot town

—for no officer ever dreams of employing his own regimental official—was alone in the secret of his mishap, with the exception of his “man” or regimental fag, who, being well paid, kept the knowledge to himself. Thus much for Captain Montague Bosh, who, not at all singularly, had made up his mind to visit his uncle as soon as “leave” permitted, with a view to make Miss Lydia Moneybags and her property his own, if possible.

Now, if there is such a thing as mutual attraction on the sympathetic system, there is equally such a thing as mutual repulsion, and such existed between Captain Montague Bosh and Lieutenant Fitzgammon, Montague Bosh envying our hero’s whiskers, and our hero envying Montague Bosh’s rather handsome fortune, for he was rich, while Fitzgammon was as poor as a rat.

This being understood, we proceed to the business of our narrative.

“Leave” time came with the first of November, and both our heroes, for we must acknowledge their dual existence, prepared for the amatory siege of Miss Lydia Moneybags—the first by invitation from his uncle, the second by *hint* only of the lady herself, but both gentlemen unknowing each other’s intentions.

Captain Montague Bosh departed with money in his purse, and plenty of it, also with his private servant and a well-filled valise, by first-class to Cheltenham.

Sub-Lieutenant Fitzgammon, with three months’ pay in advance by kindness of the paymaster, somewhat less than thirty-nine pounds, and his regimental manservant, by second-class to the same destination ; but

before going further in this narrative we must describe our own particular hero's manservant Tom.

Tom Brackles, an honest Cornishman, had enlisted in the Light Bobs for no other reason than to become Lieutenant Fitzgammon's body servant, and thus why—years ago, when they were both lads, and went out in a fishing boat for their own amusement, they were overtaken by a storm, their boat capsized half a mile from shore, and Tom Brackles would have been drowned but for Fitzgammon, who, at the risk of his own life, saved that of his humble companion.

The life thus saved Tom Brackles vowed to dedicate to the service of his protector, and although not absolutely without means enlisted in the Light Bobs as a private soldier, in order to fulfil his vow. He was therefore deeply attached to him, and scrupled at nothing in order to serve him faithfully. It was only by special favour he was allowed to accompany his master, by "leave" distinct from "furlough."

On arriving at Cheltenham, Captain Montague Bosh took up quarters with Mr. Ex-Banker Moneybags, who resided on a villa at Pittville—a charming place standing in its own grounds, and surrounded by trees. Sub-Lieutenant Fitzgammon occupied private lodgings in Cambray, at two pounds the week, undertaking, through Tom's advice, to "keep himself." For Tom was a capital housekeeper, cook, and valet, all rolled into one, besides being an economist.

The lodgings thus taken were in a genteel locality, but somewhat meagrely furnished with black horse-hair chairs

and sofa to match ; but every other particle of furniture of different pattern, lodging-house fashion.

Miss Lydia Moneybags, being notified by letter of her lover's arrival, immediately dispatched her confidential "maid" to a rendezvous with Tom Brackles, and the usual dramatis-persona of a "screaming farce" comes on the stage, if we only add the private manservant of Captain Montague Bosh—who was as cunning a rascal as possibly could be—and a mortal enemy, of course, to Tom Brackles.

The amatory campaign was opened by Miss Moneybags, who by letter described the condition of her own forces, as well as that of the opposing enemy. She was an orphan, with a fortune of twenty thousand pounds, which would be absolutely her own in two years' time, without conditions, but which she could not become possessed of before that time except with the approval of her uncle-guardian, who insisted on her marrying Captain Montague Bosh—the only son of his only sister. She described Captain Bosh as her "very horror," and would never marry him, but very, very, very much rather die an old maid. If Lieutenant Fitzgammon would only take her *without a penny*, and wait two years for her fortune, she would put up with the most desperate poverty, and even work her poor fingers to the very bone in order to keep *him*, if he could not otherwise afford to keep *her*.

Such devotion on the lady's part was love and happiness indeed ; but how was it to be contrived ? She could only marry him by special license without her guardian's permission—and how about the expense ? A special

license alone would cost five-and-twenty pounds, and another five-and-twenty for the honeymoon, at the very least. Where should he get fifty pounds?

Pondering over his difficulties after a three weeks' siege, he called his man Tom to the council, asking him if he could hit on any expedient ; but Tom's answer appalled him—"The Jews."

An explanation then ensued—once married to a lady whose fortune could not be withheld at the expiration of two years, he could borrow by paying the trifle of sixty per cent. interest ; but was that honourable ? He fancied not ; meanwhile, he would consider.

While our Sub-Lieutenant paused in his career, Captain Bosh acted in his. He knew that his enemy's strong point was his whiskers ; and speculated on the possibility of depriving him of those manly weapons of offence and defence. But how ? Could he bribe someone to cut them off during sleep ? No ; impossible. Should he get some villain, for a reward, to throw oil of vitriol on his enemy's face, and so spoil his beauty ? No ! Too unfair even for the fortunes of Cupid-warfare. But a rascal of some kind he must consult for the purpose desired. He would consult his valet, whom he knew for a thorough rogue.

This man, by name Scroggs, fell into his master's views quite readily ; and intimated that he knew how terribly "hard up" for cash poor Fitzgammon was at that very moment, through his man Tom ; also, that some means were being adopted to raise the sum of fifty pounds instant, for a special purpose most imperative, having gained that knowledge through pumping good-natured

Tom—whom he hated while he assumed to like—a certain female of their mutual acquaintance being the bone of contention.

“What has all this to do with the affair?” interrogated the Captain.

“Only this,” replied the valet, “I know a man, a barber, a barbarous man, or rather a BARBER-FIEND, who will ‘do the trick.’”

“None of your slang,” interposed the Captain, “but tell what you mean.”

“The Barber-Fiend is a money-lender, and rich as a Jew. Only guarantee me to the extent of fifty pounds, and I will ‘work the oracle.’”

“Enough of your slang; I will guarantee any amount, only what do you mean?”

“Walker!” again in slang term answered Scroggs.

“Give me only one more slang sentence, and I will kick you out. Go now, and do your best or worst, so you fulfil my errand.”

CHAPTER II.

SUB-LIEUTENANT FITZGAMMON had one friend only who was possessed of cash, an old school friend, an artist; he was poor, but not desperately so. He wrote to this friend for the loan of fifty pounds, and received for answer that he would lend the cash, but could not do so

until the expiration of exactly fifteen days, when he should receive a certain payment. Miss Moneybags had agreed to elope with him in three weeks from present date, and he must be prepared ; meanwhile he was reduced to his last shilling, so once more he called for his man Tom.

"Tom, I must raise fifty pounds somehow, or go to the dogs for want of it. I can obtain it in fifteen days' time, but want it directly. Can we not manage it?"

"Not that I know of, master."

"We must raise it. Have we nothing which—oh ! horrible necessity !—we can pledge ? My full-dress uniform ?"

"We paid our lodging with it last week."

"My court sword ?"

"We dined off it yesterday."

"My best kersey inexpressibles ?"

"In the pot for to-day."

"My best patent leather boots ?"

"I swallowed them for my breakfast."

"Spurs and all ?"

"Even so ; they stick in my throat, and half choke me this very minute."

"Have we absolutely nothing left to pledge ?"

"Nothing, except our honour."

"My honour I will never pledge. So long as I live will I hold that sacred. Have you no resource in store ?"

"Only one, master, and that a queer one. I met a fellow last night who lends money ; he is a barber, and has fallen in love with your whiskers."

"Nonsense ! Ha, ha ! Would he give me fifty pounds for them?"

"He as good as said so. But I think he is mad."

"Not much doubt about it. But what did the fellow say?"

"He said he would give fifty pounds if he had such a pair."

"Possibly ; but he could not transfer mine to his own face. Ridiculous ! But if the fellow has money to lend he might do so on my expectations, so bring him here as soon as you can."

Absurd as it might appear, our hero really thought that the barber money-lender might be induced to negotiate a loan on the assurance of his friend's letter.

At eight o'clock the money-lender came, a wonderful-looking individual, tall, lanky, and cadaverous ; his eyes had that sinister expression which denotes a capacity for fraud and cunning. He was dressed in a black coat buttoned over his chest, with a pair of trousers far too short, but strapped over his shabby boots by very long straps. If he was a barber by profession he evidently did not practise on himself, for he was both unshorn and unkempt, with a dirty shirt collar reaching up to his ears

"So you have money to lend?" spoke our hero.

"Lots of it, your honour," replied the man.

"Do you lend without any other security than a gentleman's honour?"

"No, not such a fool."

"What security do you want for fifty pounds, repayable in fifteen days?"

“ I will take your whiskers ; they are beautiful, lovely, exquisite, divine ! ”

This was said with a diabolical leer which almost frightened our hero.

“ What do you mean ? I cannot part with mine ; they are my glory.”

“ No necessity. Pledge them to me for a few days, say fourteen, and I will let you use them all the time. I will lend you fifty pounds on them.”

“ ’Pon honour, this seems ridiculous. But how do you propose ? ”

“ Sign me a contract, duly stamped, to permit of my cutting off your whiskers by this hour exact in fourteen days, and I will advance the money.”

Half doubting that the man could be in earnest, and more than half doubting his own sanity, he suffered the man to depart, and was truly surprised when he returned with a stamped agreement whereby our hero bound himself to suffer his whiskers to be SHAVED off by six o’clock in the afternoon of the fifteenth day from the present date, provided the fifty pounds advanced were *not* punctually paid, with ten per cent. interest thereon.

It was not without misgivings that our hero signed this absurd contract. What if Miss Moneybags broke her engagement with him ? or, what if his friend should fail to send the fifty pounds ? To sacrifice his whiskers, the cherished idol of his soul, nay, his matrimonial “ stock-in-trade,” would be death to all his hopes. True, they would grow again, but it had taken four years of his young life to cultivate them up to their present luxuriant

growth, and—and—the very thought of their immediate loss was terrible indeed. At all events the thing was done, so he must make the best of it.

He therefore contrived an interview with his lady-love, extracted a promise that nothing should prevent her from eloping with him fifteen days from the present time, to which she consented, sealing the contract with more kisses than we venture to record.

This done, he went to London, obtained a special license, engaged a post chaise, and arranged with a clerical friend, beside taking sundry other precautions against defeat, which being done he returned to Cheltenham, and eagerly awaited the coming day.

Meanwhile Captain Bosh performed his part in the drama, accurately informed of all which had occurred through his man Scroggs, who had taken advantage of Tom's only weakness, a love of whisky toddy, to learn all he wanted.

The old banker, Moneybags, had also possessed himself of the main facts. He knew his niece was determined on rejecting Captain Bosh, and strongly suspected she intended to marry Fitzgammon, which he could only prevent by forbidding the banns, provided they were put up, but had no legal power over a special license, his consent, absolutely, not having been insisted on by will. All he could do, therefore, was to watch his ward narrowly, and prevent her leaving his house without an escort.

As for Captain Bosh, he suspected, if he did not know, that the fourteenth day from present time was the day of

danger. He therefore planned to find some expedient which would hold the young lady beyond that special day.

He was an adept in woman's wiles and fancies, and hit upon the exact thing to effect his purpose. He knew that no living woman under the mysterious age of forty could resist a ball.

There was to be a grand ball at the assembly rooms on that identical fourteenth day evening, and all the world would be there.

He purchased tickets, and the lady could not resist. She told her lover this, and pressed him to be there as well.

In vain did our luckless hero protest, implore, pray. She was determined, and when a lady is determined nothing can break her resolution.

Fitzgammon was in despair, the miserable day came, he had but four pounds left out of his fifty, and he had to pay ten shillings for his ticket. Once more he called his man Tom into consultation, but even Tom was without a suggestion of any value. He would throttle the barber fiend if ordered so to do ; but this our hero put his veto on. Should he chloroform the wretch ? No. What then ?

"I must pay the penalty and lose my whiskers, but what would ensue ? If Miss Moneybags sees me without she will not know me."

"Perhaps the wretch will give you three days' grace ; they do so with an ordinary 'bill.'"

"But this is no ordinary bill. No, I must pay or be shorn of my glory, for I never yet forfeited my bond."

Reduced to absolute despair Fitzgammon awaited the fatal hour of six, his only dress coat—alas ! for his lost uniform—lay displayed on the bed ; his white waistcoat, his gloves, and dress pumps kept them company ; his hair brushes and comb were on the toilet table, never, perhaps, to be used in their accustomed manner for his whiskers. But what of that ? if they must be sacrificed, he comforted himself with Burns's lines

A man's a man for a' that !

It was himself the lady would marry, and not his whiskers.

Six o'clock struck, and with the last chime of the pendule in came the "Barber-Fiend," contract in one hand, but a lather-box and a pair of razors in the other.

"Have you my fifty pounds and five interest ready ?" interrogated the wretch, with a horrible leer.

"No, but I will pay you one hundred pounds in lieu of it if you wait only three days. My friend, who has promised, cannot pay me until to-morrow."

"My bond, my bond ! I will have my bond," screamed the wretch.

"A very Shylock, are you ?"

"Aye, a very Shylock ; I will have my pound of flesh."

"Take it then, but spare, oh spare my whiskers."

"Never, they are mine, mine, mine ! and I will have them rather than a thousand pounds."

"Will nothing meet you ?"

"Nothing, nothing ; I will have my bond."

"Then take it, but beware, if I die under the operation remember you are my murderer !"

Thus saying our hero, thrust into a chair by the Barber-Fiend, resigned himself to his fate ; Tom looking on ruefully, and making believe to strike the man with a poker which he had taken from the fireplace, *and which he would have used* if his master had given signal.

With eyes of fiendish delight the Barber spread a white cloth under our hero's chin, next ruthlessly cut off the magnificent whiskers close to the face, and finally shaved off the stubble, all in double quick time, the whole business occupying less than forty seconds.

After which the fellow collected the fragments from the floor, packed up his instruments, and departed, howling a frantic Ha ! Ha ! Ha ! as he left the room.

The foul deed done, the sacrifice completed, our luckless hero surveyed himself in the glass, but started aghast. He did not know himself. How then should his lady-love know him ? The thought was horror ! He would not attend the ball, he would plead illness ; but no, that would be a lie, unbecoming a gentleman. What then ? Should he go as he was and plead a freak ? No, that also would be a lie. Should he then blurt out the truth ? That would be an unnecessary stretch of candour, but—

"Master, I have it," shouted Tom in delight, "I have it."

"What ?" exclaimed Fitzgammon.

"I will make you a pair of whiskers in a jiffy, almost as good as those you have lost ; see here."

On this Tom partially unripped one of the shiny black

horsehair bolsters of the sofa, and produced a quantity of curly horsehair, thick and glossy, almost identical with the volume of whisker that had been shaved off.

Amazed at the notion, poor Fitzgammon witnessed his ingenious servant sew into a piece of light fabric a sufficient quantity of the horsehair to make a capital substitute for the lost whiskers, and these he contrived to fasten on with some gummy substance so cleverly that none but a barber expert would know from the real thing.

"These will pass muster, by candle light at all events," said the man, and really the substitute was very good indeed.

"Don't dance too violently" were his parting words, as our Sub-Lieutenant, a little moodily, departed in a cab for the scene of operations.

CHAPTER III.

CAPTAIN BOSH, who had been advised as to the success of his scheme, was astonished beyond all bounds at seeing our hero enter the ball-room as jauntily as ever, and with his whiskers intact. Had the Barber-Fiend cheated him? Yes! What should he do with that Barber-Fiend?

Merrily went the music, merrily went the dance; fair women and gallant men sped on the fantastic toe, merrily, merrily, merrily.

Beauty was there in all the allurements of youth, millinery, and jewels ; Miss Lydia Moneybags, the fairest of all, and attired (see *Myra's Journal* for the last fashion of a ball dress, for men know nothing of such matters)—well, she was beautiful exceedingly, and habited “à merville,” her golden hair, her peach blossom face, her rose-bud mouth, driving the men to distraction ; but most of all Sub-Lieutenant Fitzgammon, who waltzed, quadrilled, mazourkad, and schottischted with her till the eyes of all were fixed on her, and etiquette outraged beyond all bounds, her “card” having but one single name upon it beyond that of Sub-Lieutenant Fitzgammon.

It was in vain that her chaperone reproved, that Captain Bosh entreated, and that others prayed. She danced and danced, regardless of all opinion, till—oh, horror !—the heat became so great that our hero's whiskers slipped down, by little and little, until they fell in two distinct showers of hair upon his partner's dress.

With a shriek of consternation Miss Moneybags started from the half encircling arms of her lover, just in time to be received within those of Captain Bosh, who had followed the pair through their gyrations in utter bewilderment, and immediately a scene ensued which baffles all description. The lady did not exactly faint off outright, but gazed first on the hirsute appendages on her dress, then at the base face of her lover, uttering shriek upon shriek till she lay within the Captain's grasp dazed and powerless.

A crowd gathered round ; poor Fitzgammon standing.

fixed in terror and humiliation till the jeers of his rival and the amazed countenances of lookers-on brought him back to the terrible consequences of his bad luck, old Mr. Moneybags joining in the laughter which greeted him on all sides.

“A case of masquerading?” queried one.

“No, a case of gross deception,” ejaculated another.

“Worse than that,” shouted Captain Bosh, “a case of endeavouring to obtain a wife under false pretences. Ah! Ah!”

With these exclamations and others equally strange saluting his ears on all sides, our unlucky hero, completely overcome, made but one dart to the entrance door, and rushing down stairs, regardless of all things, hatless, cloakless, and dizzy, flung himself into the nearest cab, and drove home to his lodgings, where his faithful Tom, who saw at once what had occurred, managed to get him into bed, utterly unconscious of all things, most happily for himself.

All next day and the day after that he remained in a state of stupor, till a physician being called in, enlightend by Tom, administered restoratives which had effect, but still left the poor fellow in a maze of bewilderment, one terrible sorrow overshadowing all. He had lost his lady-love irrevocably; he could never dare to look her in the face again; he felt himself an impostor, a wretch, and doubly, triply, a fool.

The kindly physician talked to him, and tried to administer comfort, but in vain. Ridicule would attach to his name for evermore; he must hide his head from

all companionship, must leave the army, must run away to California, or commit suicide. He felt mad, mad, mad, yet sane enough to feel his own madness as an affliction beyond cure. "Oh that Barber-Fiend."

Poor Tom was also at his wit's end. He made bold to open the letter his master had expected, and found in it the fifty pound note, which had arrived only too late for the object required. With this he paid all claims, and made ready for an early departure so soon as could be contrived, feeling sure that such was absolutely necessary. But a change was about to come.

The kindly physician, who had been enlightened as to even the minutest particular of this remarkable case, and who was well acquainted with old Moneybags, made it his business to visit them, and to acquaint them with the true facts, placing them in a most favourable light, and not without success ; for, just as Fitzgammon was about to take his departure, with the slender remains of his belongings and the now useless special licence in his pocket, a carriage and pair drove up to the house, and old Moneybags with his lovely niece entered the room.

Astonished beyond all bounds at such an apparition, our hero would fain have slunk into his bedroom in utter shame, but that the first glance of the old gentleman's countenance re-assured him, as with a hearty "Here we are, old boy," he grasped hands, and, pointing to his niece, cried "Kiss him, Lyddy, never mind me ; it's all right now."

Kisses and tender meetings are all well in their place, but seem very poorly in description, particularly in a tale

such as this, whose incidents are droll rather than sentimental. A general explanation ensued, of course, all being thoroughly accounted for, and the wickedness of Captain Bosh laid bare.

Miss Lydia Moneybags, deeply touched by her lover's devotion, found in her own heart to exclaim, "The man who could sacrifice such whiskers as those to the fancies of a woman must indeed be a hero among heroes."

While her uncle found in his conscience to assume that "The man who in his wicked rivalry could effect the destruction of such glorious adornments through bribery and corruption must indeed be a scoundrel among scoundrels."

Captain Bosh was therefore sent to the right-about, and Lieutenant Fitzgammon reinstated in his vacant post.

"They will grow again, darling," whispered Miss Lydia, with a look of unutterable fondness.

And "Take her, my boy, with all her money, as soon as you please," exclaimed old Moneybags.

So it happened that the special licence was not thrown away at all, neither was the post chaise countermanded, for our hero and heroine posted on their honeymoon trip with the hearty approval of her guardian, who, with hands outstretched over their heads, gave them, in fashion theatrical, these parting words, "BLESS YOU, MY CHILDREN."

THE DEATH-ROSE.

A TRADITION OF UNDYING AFFECTION.

RELATED BY A SURGEON (FACT).

“ . . . Nor was it so.
Love is a plant whose very germ is love—
Once rooted in the bosom it *will* grow.
Despite all power to crush it or remove,
Though cold neglect assail, like winter snow,
‘Though hope be not, nor sunshine from above,
Nurtured with tears—’twill thrive the goodlier tree
‘The more ’tis watered by adversity.”

“Don Juan Married,” Sequel to Byron’s
“Don Juan,” by C. S. H.

CHAPTER I.

SHORTLY after my establishment, and in the immediate vicinity of Aldershot town, there resided, at a pretty cottage bordering upon the high road, an aged couple, for whom the name of “Smith” will suffice.

They were a childless couple, the man having all his life followed the occupation of gardening, and was noted for his love of flowers in general, but very particularly for that “Queen of Flowers,” the Rose.

Of late years, indeed for the space of twenty years, he had been head gardener to a gentleman, who, in consideration of long service, had pensioned him off, and granted him the privilege of dwelling, rent free, in the

two-roomed cottage which afforded shelter to his declining life, and in which he passed his time cultivating his favourite roses.

I know not whether it has ever been noticed that, whereas individual couples who have been blessed with a numerous progeny very often indeed bicker and quarrel in their old age, the love of their youth degenerating into something like indifference towards each other, individual couples who have not been blessed with children retain the old love of their youthful days not merely intact, but with increasing power as their days approach an end. Perhaps it is that each one of the two seeks to comfort the other one for the misfortune, not contemplating the fact that children are sometimes a very modified blessing, entailing much care, anxiety, and responsibility, the which, as unblessed by children, the sterile couple at the very least avoid. Be this, however, as it may, Smith and his wife, aged seventy years, certainly exhibited an amount of conjugal affection far beyond the common. They were never apart, domestic duties were very light in their tiny cottage—breakfast over they would sit down together conversing or reading, for they were both fairly educated; dinner over they would jointly attend their roses, weeding, hoeing, training, or picking off useless leaves, and when not otherwise employed walked out arm in arm, like youthful lovers, only with much greater deference to each other's wants than usual, even among the young.

“Darby and Joan” was the appellation by which they were good-humouredly called in the neighbourhood, that is to say by the adult neighbourhood, yet not so by

the juveniles, who irreverently nick-named them "Punch and Judy" instead, and oftentimes made terrible inroads on their floral treasures, which were in summer time greatly prized by both old and young, as also far oftener stolen than given away or sold.

They were, in truth, a happy couple, as happy almost as Adam and Eve may have been before tasting the apple, but, like unto them, their paradise was not to endure, for one sad, one doubly sad day, poor Susan Smith fell ill, and after lingering one single week, breathed her last in the arms of her sorrowing husband, whose grief was pitiable to look upon—so sad was it, so child-like, so utterly beyond the powers of comfort or the sympathy of generous friends.

Accustomed as I had been, through my professional duties, to death-bed misery, I never before witnessed so afflicting a scene; the old man clung to the body of his life partner for hours after her decease, calling her by endearments of expression which would have been utterly childless but for their intensity of affection, and was only withdrawn from the senseless clay by those whose office it was to tend the dead.

It was on the eve before her funeral that about half-past ten o'clock, just as I had retired to bed after a hard day's round of practice, my night-bell was rung so furiously as to call for an imperative answer. and before I could slip on some portion of my dress, the ring sounded once more, even more furiously.

Seizing hold of my instrument case, I descended, but only to find my poor friend Smith in a state of frantic excitement.

To my inquiries of what was wrong, he answered only by calling on me to make haste and bring "my tools" (for such he considered my surgical instruments to be) with me.

Not knowing what the occasion might be, I accompanied him as quickly as possible to his house, and was astonished, if not slightly alarmed, at his locking his door and placing the key in his pocket, for I had begun to think the man was partly out of his mind with grief.

On a couple of tressels lay the coffin, with his wife's body attired in the paraphernalia of death, the coffin lid being off.

"Look at her there," he spoke, in a voice of terrible grief. "See her there," he again spoke, "and listen! Look upon her, I say. Well! In life she was mine—bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh—God made us two one."

"Of course," I replied, "you were married to her; she was your wife."

"My wife? Yes! My good true wife; *living*, her heart was mine; *dead*, it shall be mine too. So, take out your tools, and with a long sharp knife cut me out her heart."

Horror-struck for the moment—not so much at the mere act of using my scalpel for such purpose as at the mad looks of the man—I shrank back.

"You don't like the job, maybe," he cried. "Then give me your knife, and I will do it myself."

Seeing that the man was in earnest, and certainly not exactly mad, I endeavoured to reason with him as to the

indecentcy of the act, asking what he intended with the heart.

"That's my business," he replied; "take it out at once—you will do it nicely, better than I could; but if you will not I must."

"What if I refuse?"

"You will not refuse, kind, good man as you are. Is she not my property? Is not her flesh my flesh, her heart my heart? And may I not do as I like with my own?"

It was thus the man argued, and even almost prayed, until, seeing that he would most assuredly partially dissect the body himself, I reluctantly complied, leaving the house immediately in fear of a scene.

For several months after this I did not set eyes on poor Smith, but had heard accounts of his somewhat strange behaviour in regard to many particulars. He lived entirely by himself, shunning all society, and passing all his time in one occupation—that of tending one single rose tree in a little patch of ground at the side of his house, where a small window enabled him to watch it for hours together. All the rose bushes in his front garden were left to themselves, still growing of course, but untended.

The one single tree, or slip of a tree, which received all his attention was of six or seven months' growth only. He had pruned it carefully, so that only a small heading of branches and leaves crowned the top. He had placed round it a little border of rough stones and glass bottles to protect the roots of the tree, was seen to manure it with salt to keep away the slugs, and to water it

assiduously, giving to it all the care a mother might give her child. He was also heard to speak to it endearing words, muttered only in singular tone, as though speaking to some living being, whose rest he feared to disturb. By and bye a bud gratified his eyes ; it was a single bud, for the tree was but a sapling, and his joy at the sight of this bud was something to look upon. It was the urchins of the neighbourhood who first noticed his singular behaviour, and whispered of it to each other, so openly at length that the old man became alarmed.

Up to that time his garden patch was but ill secured against the inroad of mischief ; he accordingly employed a neighbour to purchase some wood battens and made himself a rail sufficient to keep out trespassers as he hoped, and in due time had the pleasure of seeing his one bud develop itself into a magnificent flower, a rose of roses, a veritable queen rose.

It was at the close of July, when the days were long and the nights short, that his rose had attained its full maturity, one splendid flower with two little buds, like two pretty children clinging to the skirts of their mother. From the earliest dawn to the last blush of day the bereaved widower gazed upon his treasure, sometimes walking round it, very often speaking to it fond words such as he had been used to speak to his wife, and by so doing rather too particularly arrested the attention of sundry mischievous boys, who, heedless of the old man's wonderful love for his flower, began first to make faces to him, to jeer at him, and at length to threaten that they

would pluck the rose off its stem, guard it as best he might.

Frightened, nay horrified at this idea, the old man determined on watching his treasure by night as well as by day. With this intention he kept the window of his sleeping room open, moved his bed into such a position as enabled him to keep watch even while lying down, and in this he was aided by a full moon for several nights after his first alarm. The nights of full moon, however, soon passed away, and as boys generally did not prowl about in the night time, he hoped, after several sleepless nights, to obtain one sound period of rest, but still with his window open, and, as he hoped, with his eyes not too firmly closed. He also knew himself to be quick of hearing.

In this state of hopeful somnolency, he retired to bed one fatal night, and about eleven o'clock, when all the neighbourhood should have been at perfect rest, he, in a species of slumber which was yet not quite that which locks all the senses in oblivion, caught the sound of breaking wood, of rapid footsteps, and of a wicked voice crying "I've got it," followed by a retreat of the footsteps outside.

With a shriek of horror, as afterwards told by one of the two wickedurchins who had thus despoiled the old man, he leaped out of his bed, out of the window, and, in his night-dress only, followed the younger of the two boys who had succeeded in tearing off the beautiful rose, bringing him back to the house, and there outside, not inside, plunged his pruning knife into the lad's abdomen, inflicting a terrible wound.

An immediate outcry brought two neighbours to the spot. I was sent for in all haste to bind up the lad's wound, which ultimately proved not very serious, and the old man Smith, who had relapsed into a fatuous silence, was kept in some sort of custody till daylight should enable other persons to take charge.

A magisterial investigation took place, of necessity, and yet none was needed, for with the loss of his rose the old man lost his reason, falling into a state of absolute fatuity, and within the space of three months died in the infirmary of Guildford Workhouse.

As for the wounded boy, he recovered in about three weeks, the knife having failed to inflict any very serious mischief, but while attending upon him I bethought of the old gardener's extraordinary love for his flower, and formed an opinion as to its more than ordinarily powerful cause ; indeed, I may say that from the very first an idea had taken root in my mind, which I determined to investigate by digging up the rose tree which had brought about the singular climax.

Accordingly, borrowing a spade from the nearest residence, I set to work with my own hands, disdaining assistance, and very carefully removing the earth round the tree found, quite as I suspected, that a cutting of some one rose bush had been thrust through an animal substance, that substance being *without rational doubt* that of a HUMAN heart, for although nearly rendered back through decomposition to its parent earth, enough remained to satisfy *my* doubts, no other person than myself being cognisant of the true facts.

Now in recording the somewhat revolting circumstance which, in its first aspect, led to the issue now explained, I cannot help dwelling upon the very singular force of love which sought to renew life *out of death* in this particular instance, evincing, as it did, a love beyond the common love, as well as the fact that truth is sometimes more wonderful than romance.

The result of a magisterial investigation was as the reader may expect—the poor man was declared mad, and ultimately died insane before any formal trial could take place at the forthcoming assizes.

Carefully taking charge of the rose tree, I brought it to my own house, and, planting it in my own garden, had the curious pleasure of seeing it bloom year after year in glorious luxuriance, very many of my friends having begged “slips,” and, in their turn, obtained a beautiful memorial of the incident which led to this record of “The Death-rose.”

THE TINKER'S LEGACY.

“Story! Lord love you, sirs, I’ve none to tell.”

GEORGE CANNING’S “Knifegrinder.”

CHAPTER I.

SOME five-and twenty years before the institution of Aldershot Camp, and while yet the parish itself contained somewhat less than four hundred inhabitants, the RED LION Tavern, situate close to Aldershot Green, was the rallying place of all those very few poor and weary indwellers—chiefly agricultural labourers—who could afford to disburse a small amount of “coppers” in exchange for a pint of very middling beer, when, from the hour of seven to nine o’clock, a couple of benches set out in front of that “hostelrie” on a summer evening found a tolerable complement of honest gossipers ready to hear or tell whatever might be worth telling or hearing without prejudice to all the world—beyond their own vicinity.

It was upon a somewhat cool evening for summer that a party of seven or eight individuals, who had been sitting on the benches outside, thought proper to shift within the house, carrying with them their mugs of beer and pipes of the old “churchwarden” pattern, intending to enjoy themselves for one hour longer, before retiring to bed.

Four of these individuals were agricultural labourers,

in the employment of Mr. Alden, poor enough, Heaven knows, but yet able to pay for a pint of beer once a week ; one other was a man named Attfield, renting some land near the parish church ; another was a tradesman in the grocery line, named Gosden ; and the last of the seven was a very tall man, named Pharo, whose occupation is not recorded, otherwise than that he was the owner of a very small property which caused him to be regarded as a trifle better off than the generality of his neighbours.

The conversation of this seven individuals had turned upon one matter only—the matter of a new appointment to the perpetual curacy of the parish—which gift was in the hands of two (or more) tithe-holders, and, though of little worth, still a fact of great concern to the parishioners at large. This reverend gentleman, whom we will call “Jones,” had favourably impressed his hearers on the previous Sunday by delivering a sermon *which had no hard words in it*, and which was therefore better understood and appreciated than the discourse of a former clergyman, who had treated his humble hearers with Sunday written discourses, formerly declaimed before an University audience, at St. Mary's Church.

They had just agreed between themselves that “Parson” was “of the right sort,” and not too “uppish,” when their attention was called to a low wail or cry of distress which emanated from outside. On sallying forth it was perceived that a travelling tinker—who had pushed his two-wheeled apparatus up to the tavern-entrance—had fallen down in a fit, overcome by exertion,

and who seemed to be in the very last stage of consumptive disease.

As a matter of course the poor fellow was immediately raised from the ground and his wants attended to by the kindly wife of the landlord, who put him to bed with all dispatch, but not before his appearance had excited very considerable remark among the company, now augmented by the presence of several other men and one woman—a Mrs. Hewett—who after scrutinising the face and figure of the poor fellow with an eye by no means pitying, carried herself off without speaking, and presently returned in company with her brother—one Simon Gripe, a character in the neighbourhood—better known than respected, he having been at one time a lawyer's clerk and process server, but who, having been left a small legacy, had retired upon his laurels (of discoloured parchment), and who for the last fifteen years had rented a small cottage in Church-lane.

Simon Gripe, on being taken by his sister to the bedside of the invalid, also appeared to view him with but little pity—but, as he said nothing, his looks were not regarded by the rest of the company, one of whom suggested the necessity for a doctor, lest a “crownor's 'quest” should be entailed.

Meanwhile the poor tinker's general appearance became a matter of comment to all ; it was seen that he was tall, very thin, and very sorrowful to look upon, but by no means ill clad, nor exactly in character with his occupation, giving it to be inferred that he was one who had seen better days.

After his person had been commented on, his tinkering apparatus came in for its share of comment, and aroused much surprise. It was found to be of a very expensive make, with every convenience for knife grinding and tinkering, but also with a perfect set of watch mending tools, the name of "Johnson" being cut into the wood-work of the machine, which had been at one time artistically painted.

"Stranger in these parts, I guess," cried one of the bystanders.

"Not so great a stranger as some of you think," growled Simon Gripe.

"Who be he then, if you knows 'un?" queried the first speaker.

"Dick Stanley—the poor's rate collector—who bolted with the tin some seven years ago," answered Simon Gripe.

"And let in his sureties for five hundred pounds," exclaimed Mrs. Hewett.

"Can't be Dick Stanley," interposed Attfield. "He weighed sixteen stone, and this fellow can't weigh ten!—nonsense."

"'Tis Dick Stanley for all that," once more spoke Simon Gripe. "Dick could tinker a kettle or a watch. Didst note the watchmaker's tools in his barrow?"

"Aye," exclaimed one of the labouring men, "I mind well he tinkered Reuben Yates's timekeeper, and for the matter of that could do a'most everything besides cheating the poor."

“He didn't cheat the poor, he cheated his sureties—Allden was one.”

Comments of this sort flew about briskly enough for the greater part of an hour, the upshot being that Mr. Richard Stanley, the rate collector, and the invalid upstairs were identified as one, and not merely so, but acknowledged so to be by the tinker himself—for, on arrival of the doctor, he confessed that his troubled conscience led him back to the scenes of his delinquency for the strange purpose of rendering what restitution he could, poor as it might be.

The doctor, a practitioner from Ash, gave it as his opinion that his patient might not live many hours, and certainly could not survive over the next day. This being told to the man himself, he appeared rejoiced rather than otherwise, and desired the use of pen and ink, wherewith, as he said, to make his will, for the benefit of the poor whom he had once defrauded.

On learning this, Simon Gripe, the ex-lawyer's clerk and process server, volunteered to write out the will in proper form, a service which the dying tinker gladly accepted. The said “will” was therefore drawn in legal form at the dying man's dictation, signed with a trembling hand, and duly witnessed by the landlord and Mr. Hewett, after which Dick Stanley, the tinker, paid his last debt to his last creditor, Nature herself, and died.

Immediately after this became known, for it was on the day after his arrival that the poor fellow died, Simon Gripe was interrogated as to the terms of the dead man's will, which he, lawyer like, objected to tell, as not according

to usage, until the dead man was buried. But on its being told by the landlord that the burial should not take place at his expense, the ex-lawyer perceived that it would be best to learn the testator's means as well as intentions, and he therefore decided on making the will known in presence of competent authority.

Accordingly on the morrow half-a-dozen of those who had witnessed the tinker's arrival were summoned, the will was read, and, apart from all technicalities insisted on by Gripe himself, resulted in the following :—

The deceased's property was found to consist of twenty-two pounds ten shillings, neatly sewn up in the lining of his waistcoat, and his tinkering apparatus, valued at ten pounds or thereabout, making in all thirty-two pounds ten shillings, out of which sum he desired that his funeral expenses should be first deducted, and the remaining cash divided, in equal sums, among the twelve poorest men and the six poorest women in the parish, his landlord at the Red Lion being executor.

Passing over all unnecessary details we merely record that the man was buried, the twenty-two pounds cash duly found, and the tinker's barrow duly sold, but that, instead of realising ten pounds, it was sold for thirty-five shillings only, as a counterpoise to which loss the poor man's own clothes were sold, realising twenty-five shillings, making the sum total as beneath :—

Cash found on person	...	...	£22	10	0
Sale of barrow	...	...	1	15	0
Sale of clothes	...	...	1	5	0
			<hr/>		
			£25	10	0

against which, for funeral expenses and medical attendance, there stood the sum of seven pounds fifteen shillings, making the grand total resulting seventeen pounds fifteen shillings available for charity, or in other words, almost one pound for each one of the twelve poor men and six poor women according to the tinker's will.

As a matter of course a circumstance of this kind became noised about rapidly, and the extreme poor of the district became wide awake to their interests accordingly, calling upon the overseer, the churchwardens, and "mine host" of the Red Lion for a speedy settlement of accounts, anticipating their dividend with feverish anxiety and such persistence that host, overseer, and churchwardens found themselves overpowered with business.

Now it is generally understood that the executants of a will are permitted something like twelve months' grace before fulfilling their trust. But the poor of Aldershot *en masse* indignantly protested against this delay, clamouring for an immediate settlement; and in common justice it is only fair to tell that "mine host" of the Red Lion, trustee and executor, at once saw the propriety of acceding to the general wish. But herein lay the difficulty—it was to the eighteen very poorest that the legacy was bequeathed. WHO, then, WERE THE EIGHTEEN POOREST? Aye, WHO?

This question must be answered categorically and correctly before the distribution could be made, and how? That the poor of Aldershot were numerous all well knew, but between poor, poorer, and poorest were degrees to be investigated, or the law would not run.

Lists were proposed, names handed in, supplications made, quickly and thickly ; mine host and the overseer had to give hourly audience till their patience as well as their time began to fail before something like a conclusion was arrived at in the determination to hold a committee of investigation, that same being ultimately agreed upon to sit after one o'clock on Saturday afternoon in front of the Red Lion, weather permitting, "al fresco." Just, however, as this determination had been arrived at, a kind of afterthought struck the overseer, which afterthought he communicated to the two churchwardens, who in their turn communicated it to Simon Gripe, who in his turn concurred, the result of which was that "mine host" of the Red Lion was ordered to prepare a rump steak supper on the evening before, with a couple of bottles of port wine, at eight precisely.

"Who for?" quoth mine host.

"For overseer, churchwardens, and clerk," replied his dictator, *pro tem*.

"And who is to pay?" again quoth mine host.

"The dead tinker. Is it not in the matter of his affairs that I and my colleagues are about to take the trouble? and is it not you who will benefit by the charge? You are executor and administrator according to your best judgment, eh?"

"True enough," concurred 'mine host,' "but"—

"But what?"

"Only this, Mr. Overseer, I don't like the responsibility. If you now and the churchwardens would but relieve me of that, you bring the proper persons to

distribute the money, I will obey orders, but not till then."

"So be it," replied the overseer, "I and the churchwardens will absolve you; so hand over the cash to-morrow, and we will see to its proper distribution, for mark you, friend, the poor must be taken care of, yes, the poor must be taken care of. Heaven bless the poor !!!"

According to this arrangement, at seven o'clock on that same evening mine host of the Red Lion solemnly handed over to Messrs. the Overseer and Churchwardens a small deal box containing the sum of seventeen pounds fifteen shillings, receiving in return an acknowledgment in due form, and at eight o'clock precisely a quartette, comprising the individuals before enumerated, sate down to as fine a supper of rump steak and old port wine as ever gladdened the hearts or stomachs of overseer, churchwarden, or lawyer's clerk.

From eight o'clock till eleven the quartette ate and drank for the benefit of the poor, toasting first their noble selves, but afterwards, at least it is to be so hoped, the healths of the twelve poor men, for whose good they laboured, in the following words to a jolly tune—

For *he's* a jolly good fellow,

and afterwards to the health of the six poor women—

For *she's* a jolly good fellow, &c., &c. ;

thereby proving that philanthropy is even yet a virtue among overseers and churchwardens, as also, occasionally,

in the bosom of an ex-lawyer's clerk and process server,
for

All are jolly good fellows,
Which nobody can deny.

CHAPTER II.

ON the morning following this little celebration mine host of the Red Lion found himself two pounds five shillings the richer, and, with his tongue thrust curiously in the right side of his mouth, rather guessed that the money-box of Messrs. the Overseer and Churchwardens would display itself two pounds five shillings the poorer; but what matter? the responsibility was not his! certainly not. If overseer and churchwardens were labouring for the poor, so too was he in tending upon them; it was his business, and business *is* business, "which nobody can deny."

At two o'clock precisely overseer, churchwardens, and Simon Gripe made their appearance before the Red Lion. It was a blazing hot day, a day of thirst, a day wherein thirsty folks must drink or die. A tolerably large table was set forth just outside the main doors; upon it was a mighty cheese, ordered by one of the churchwardens, flanked by three two-gallon loaves, sundry mugs, and pipes of the most formidable length. It was clear

that the churchwardens calculated on a lengthy sitting.

Hardly had our officials made their appearance than several of the slightly richer parishioners came also, bearing in their hearts the very best intentions toward their poorer brethren, while in their hands they held certain strips of paper with the names of those whom they hoped to benefit inscribed thereon ; accompanying them were others, both male and female parishioners, for the rumour of good fortune to come had spread far and wide, not only through Aldershot, but also through Ash, and many, who could not hope to participate, came through curiosity, till the whole space before the Red Lion was filled with eager faces and curiously minded lookers-on.

Mr. Overseer was voted unanimously to the chair, supported by the two churchwardens right and left, while Simon Gripe occupied the vice-chair as secretary in plenipo.

Business began by the chairman observing that the weather was overpoweringly hot ; that ale and beer were the natural quenchers of thirst and heat, wherefore it became necessary that such quenchers should be immediately placed on the table.

“A minute” of this fact was made by the vice-president secretary. Ale and beer were accordingly placed on the table, and immediately paid for out of the box for the benefit of the poor.

A second speech from the chair proclaimed that “tobacco” was a fit accompaniment to ale and beer,

wherefore tobacco was ordered, brought in, and paid for, a second "minute" being entered by the vice-president secretary, in accordance with rule —.

A third speech from the chair notified that bread and cheese were fitting accompaniments for ale, beer, and tobacco ; also, that as the cheese upon the table appeared to be a somewhat large cheese, there was sufficient thereof to distribute among those who surrounded the table ; the bread also looked very good. He therefore proposed that such as loved bread and cheese should partake, and welcome.

A loud shout answered, a shout of approval, but, before any one among the assembled guests could avail himself of such offer, mine host of the Red Lion put forth his claim, receiving cash to the amount of nigh upon thirty shillings, the cheese being one of the very best, weighing forty pounds at least.

Mr. Vice-President Secretary was proceeding as before to make minutes of the proceeding, when President Overseer made the remark "Bother ! don't trouble yourself with particulars ; let our friends eat, drink, and be merry till what is here is gone, then to business."

It did not take long to finish the mighty cheese, several two-gallon loaves, and a goodly allowance of ale (every item being paid for when brought forth), so that by the time of three o'clock Mr. President Overseer, with the best of intentions for the benefit of the poor, thought proper to call on several parishioners for the names of such as might be entitled to a share in the "Tinker's legacy."

The names were very numerous, so numerous, in fact, that a selection from among them was difficult in the extreme, causing a variety of argument and some strange complications as to who were the very *very* poor.

"Not those in the workhouse," exclaimed one, "for they are sumptuously fed, warmly clad, and well housed; while we, who pay rates and taxes, are compelled to live hard, clothe ourselves poorly, and rent houses which let in the rain."

"That's true," cried some others.

"Us is the poor as ought to git the money," spoke another.

"Hold your jaw, Tom Harris," vociferated his neighbour. "You've gotten nine shillings a week, and only ten mouths to fill! Let them as is not so rich as you get their rights."

"Now then, my good fellows," spoke the chairman, "let us examine these slips first."

Whereupon a dozen slips or more were submitted for judgment, containing the names of "Bowers," "Thompson," "Hunt," "Smith," "Jones," and "Robinson"—all very poor indeed, and each fairly entitled to participate in the tinker's legacy; provided none could be found *poorer* than even these.

"Put down old Dame Bowers for one. She is eighty years old."

"Put down Gaffer Wallace. He's eighty-one."

"Put down Jem Stokes. He's a cripple."

"Put down Mother Greenwood."

"And old Dame Blundell."

“No ! Old John Kimber allows her eighteen-pence a week. She can do without charity.”

Two or three dozen other names were proposed, beside those enumerated upon slips of paper, making in all twice as many as the tinker's legacy was calculated to relieve ; and so far embarrassed Mr. Chairman Overseer that he held up his hand to signal the crowd, and loudly shouted “Stop ! Stop ! If you go on at this rate there will be more applicants than shillings to relieve them ; pray, my good people, give me a little breathing time, and—and—another mug of ale. For by St. Lazarus, Guardian of the Poor, nothing makes a fellow so thirsty as labouring for the poor.”

“Take a pull at this,” kindly spoke his right hand supporter, offering a mug, which Mr. Chairman Overseer placed to his lips, and then threw down.

“Empty, by Jingo ! Bring me another.”

On hearing this, mine host whispered in Mr. Chairman's ear sundry words, which appeared to slightly astonish him, but eliciting reply—

“The tap exhausted ! Impossible ! Well, no matter. Bring forth a thirty-six gallon cask—don't you see how thirsty all these poor fellows are ?—look at Dame Blundell there ; have you no bowels of compassion for your fellow creatures ? Out with the cask, I tell you, and let all draw for themselves—but first remember me.”

Hearing this, mine host, who began to perceive that the speaker's voice was thickening, communed with the two churchwardens, who evidently seconded the views of their principal by dipping into the money box and

complying with whatever demand was made, after which a thirty-six gallon cask was brought out into the open, and broached amidst shouts of universal approval, parishioners of all grades, both men and women, taking their turn as fast as mugs could be filled or thirsty throats could swallow. A philanthropist would have been immeasurably delighted with the happy faces abounding, contentment was upon many a countenance after a thirsty pull at a quart jug, expectation of a happy sort dwelt on many more as their owners approached the hospitable tap, and eager hope attached itself to those of the outsiders whose turn might come next in aid of the poor.

The thirty-six gallon cask was soon emptied, a second brought out and paid for, Mr. Chairman Overseer looking around him with a beaming countenance, such as could only result from the consciousness of doing good, and if, as in truth, his speech became more and more husky, it was only to be expected from the ardour with which he performed his selection of persons—those of the proposed recipients of the tinker's charity—and taking a draught from his mug between each individual name, till they reached forty in number, exactly twenty-two beyond those needed.

We will not take cognisance of all which happened during the next hour, for the innumerable comments of those who participated in the orgie, the strange behaviour of some, and the just ridicule of others, would fill more pages than the matter is worth—one observation must, however, be recorded in justice to all, namely, that good humour prevailed throughout. What if Messrs. the

Chairman, Churchwardens, and Secretary, all of them, became husky in their talk or unsteady on their legs—their intention had been charitable—it was but the flesh which had succumbed while the spirit was yet strong, but it appeared singular, nevertheless, that mine host of the Red Lion, from first to last, somehow contrived to maintain a sober and sedate countenance, supplying his ale and securing its payment with a solemnity of countenance denoting immense self-control.

It was not until all the malt liquor on his premises had been consumed, and the fact communicated to the two churchwardens, that a lull fell upon the assembled crowd, which had somewhat fallen away, leaving only such as had brought their little lists of proposed recipients, and who clearly saw that the tinker's legacy must have considerably suffered through the benevolence of its administrators.

It was also only too evident that Mr. Chairman Overseer was more than properly overcome with benevolence and beer, that Messrs. the two Churchwardens—seasoned vessels as they undoubtedly were—could scarcely be made to contain more, and that Mr. Vice-Chairman Secretary was incapable of making any further minutes of the proceedings, when an addition to the company was seen to advance in the persons of Farmer Hart and Mr. Robert Lloyd, both substantial yeomen of approved repute. These two gentlemen descended from their horses, and, after a brief parley with the host, seated themselves at the table outside, when a bystander attempted to enlighten them as to the

state of affairs, but owing to some incoherence of speech failed to explain otherwise than that "plenty to eat and drink was to be had for the asking, out of a thousand pounds legacy, left by a tinker."

"A thousand pounds, by St. Barleycorn, but that is wonderful," exclaimed Farmer Hart. "Let us drink to his good health then."

"The legacy man must be dead," cried Mr. Robert Lloyd, "we cannot drink his health."

"Let's drink to his benevolent memory then. Here, landlord, brandy and water hot for two, with a slice of lemon in it," replied Mr. Lloyd.

"Who says brandy and water hot?" cried Mr. Chairman Overseer, somewhat aroused from his semi-consciousness.

"I do."

"And I."

"And me as well," ungrammatically shouted Mr. Vice.

On hearing which demands mine host of the Red Lion, having first cast a sly glance at the money box by Mr. Chairman's side, moved about with alacrity, and in double quick time produced the desired stimulant, some few of the "outsiders" looking on with grim countenances, while others departed in haste, either because they saw little chance of advancing the interests of the poor, or because they too were not asked to partake of the improved "tipple;" it is to be hoped the former sentiment prevailed.

Two or three of the most pertinent advocates for the

poor endeavoured to explain matters to the two yeomen, but unsatisfactorily, and shortly afterwards departed, muttering to themselves words the reverse of complimentary.

In the course of one hour all the rest of the outsiders wended homewards, leaving none but the four officials, by this time thoroughly drunk, and the two yeomen, very much in the same predicament, but yet, like Oliver Twist, calling for more.

More, it was "brandy hot" being forthcoming, after mine host had again glanced into the money box. The hot stimulant, prepared by the host's wife, soon took effect upon the two worthy yeomen, who joined the four officials in bowing their heads upon the table, utterly unconscious of all mundane affairs.

It was now five o'clock. The blazing sun had considerably modified the intensity of its rays as they fell upon the six sleepers, when a pony carriage coming from the Ash Road drove leisurely adown the bend, which led towards the parsonage up an incline. It was the new clergyman, who had been on a district visit, probably to one of those very poor whom the tinker's legacy ought to have helped.

Noticing the curious fact of six sleepers taking their nap altogether in somewhat peculiar attitudes, the reverend gentleman reined in his pony, and beckoning to the landlord made inquiry touching the circumstance. He had heard about the legacy itself, but had had no idea that its distribution was to take place so soon, or in so informal a manner, or he would certainly have looked

closer into it. With some peculiarity of manner, but yet with a sly twinkle of his left optic, mine host gave his version of what had taken place, thereby sadly decomposing the gravity of the reverend hearer.

"You did very wrong, my worthy friend," the reverend gentleman proceeded, "by not placing the matter in my hands. Charity is the peculiar privilege of the Church and its delegated ministers. Verily, I much fear that this tinker's bequest has fallen upon barren soil; how much do you say was the sum?"

"Seventeen pounds fifteen shillings," replied the landlord.

"To have been distributed among eighteen poor individuals."

"Exactly so, your Reverence."

"And how much of the seventeen pounds fifteen shillings remains now, after all expenses have been paid?"

"I'll look into the box," replied mine host, who forthwith peered into the wooden depository, still at the right hand of Mr. Chairman Overseer.

"How much?" again queried the clergyman.

"EXACTLY SIXPENCE," chuckled the landlord.

"Verily, verily, this is an abominable scandal," sadly spoke the reverend gentleman. "The whole proceeds of a good man's charitable intention wasted on a drove of besotted wretches, little better than swine."

"They are your Reverence's parishioners," gently interposed the landlord.

“True, woe’s me, but none of my teaching. I came among you only last week.”

“True again, your Reverence, had you only been here one month ago things would have been different, of course.”

“They would have been different, sirrah, had you told me what was about to have been done only yesterday ; but, alas ! alas ! By the by, what do you propose doing with the sixpence which is left ? I much fear me you are a—a—a—”

“Well, your Reverence, I was just thinking that as the sixpence would be of no use to the eighteen poor men and women, it would just pay for one strong glass of brandy and water FOR YOUR REVERENCE, if only you are not too proud to accept it.”

“Proud ! why, man alive ! It would indeed ill be-
seem one of my cloth to harbour so mean a sentiment—
humility is our only pride. HAND OVER THE GLASS,
honest man ! Charity covereth a multitude of sins.
Be sure you come to church on Sunday next.”

THE HEIR-IN-TAIL.

A STORY OF YESTERDAY.

“Blue blood may tell ; but so may red blood, and the two seldom mix. Generally speaking it is the male progenitor who prevails, but the female sometimes, and if the red blood, *woe to the offspring.*”

American Tract (Nameless).

CHAPTER I.

VISCOUNT SMYJTHE, of Smyjtheville, in the county of Hampshire, a tall, aristocratic, intellectual-looking gentleman, somewhat above sixty years of age, sate one fine morning in the month of April, Anno Domini 1873, in a high-backed leather chair, with his considering-cap on his head and an unopened letter before him.

It was in his library that his Lordship sate, where he had already breakfasted, as evinced by the presence of a butler's tray covered with snowy damask, and a small silver service, together with the usual concomitants of a morning meal.

The reasons why Viscount Smyjthe then wore his considering-cap, and hesitated to open a letter of great importance, were dual—firstly, because he feared bad news more than he hoped for good ; and secondly, because of the prevailing fault in his disposition, which was indecision of character, and yet, who is there among

the family of mankind that has not, time after time, committed a like foolish error, by attempting to guess at the contents of a missive instead of at once breaking the seal and learning the truth?

Viscount Smyjthe knew perfectly well the letter was from his confidential solicitor, and that it was likely to contain certain intelligence which must seriously affect his after life—the climax of a twelvemonth's anxiety—the culminating point of his very existence, news which might, in event of his own premature death, consign his wife and seven daughters to absolute penury, although the present income of his estate was fully twenty thousand pounds per annum.

The reason of this peculiar circumstance renders it necessary to subjoin a brief family narrative.

The grandfather of Viscount Smyjthe had chosen to entail his entire property upon the "heirs male of his body, legally begotten," &c., &c., little anticipating that a time might come when no male heir might be in existence, or at least forthcoming, and that a plentiful crop of female representatives might be thrown upon the tender mercies of such LAW as is *not* made and provided in such case. Such an event had, however, come to pass, after a peculiar fashion.

The founder of the Smyjthe family had been one "John Smith" reared in the Foundling Hospital, and apprenticed to a drysalter in Tooley-street, whom he had succeeded in business after marrying his master's only daughter. He was known to be the most obliging man in all existence, and ultimately realised half-a-million of

money through such peculiarity. He had obliged the Government of his country as a contractor, notably in the matter of salt-junk. It was he who obliged our Admiral in the Red Sea by despatching him blocks of rotten wood in lieu of pickled pork (clearing twenty thousand pounds by the transaction), in the humane hope that "Jack" would not find out the difference. It was he who obliged his Royal Highness the Duke of York with the loan of one hundred thousand pounds, at the ridiculously small interest of ninety-nine per cent. (and received every penny of it when Parliament paid his Royal Highness's debts). It was he who, long years afterwards, obliged Lord Castelreagh by betraying the confidence of certain Irish Pro-Patriots, conveyed through tubs of butter from Cork (whereby his lordship got himself into such a scrape that he cut his throat—accidentally—while shaving).

After having obliged innumerable patrons, Mr. John Smith, at the instigation of Mrs. John Smith, thought it time he should oblige himself, and did so, in a manner highly creditable to his abilities as a far-seeking wide-reaching man of the world ; for becoming acquainted with a noble Earl on the eve of bankruptcy—one half of whose estate was settled on his Countess—he contrived to purchase the other half a dead bargain, whereby the said noble Earl was enabled to swindle his creditors and live handsomely, beyond the jurisdiction of English law, abroad.

The estate thus purchased was indeed a bargain, for in addition to containing some twenty thousand acres of

land, a handsome mansion, a fine well-wooded park, and more than a dozen valuable homesteads, it comprised a pocket borough, containing only three inhabitants, but returning two members to Parliament, being at the rate of one individual and a half to each representative.

How such a bargain slipped through the fingers of a peer is somewhat a mystery, but so it was, and Mr. John Smith, being fully conscious of the influence he had thereby gained, determined on making the most of it—very particularly eked on by Mrs. John Smith, who had ambitious notions of her own, as well as very refined ideas of gentility; above all things she detested the plebeian name of Smith.

Whenever this lady sought to bring her influence to bear on her husband, she was accustomed to “stir him up with a long pole,” figuratively speaking. It may possibly strike the reader that this expression was but a poor specimen of genteel thought; but no matter, Tooley-street gentility is, no doubt, “*sui generis*.” At all events, Mrs. John Smith commenced operations by persuading Mr. J. S. to eliminate the letter *i* from his vulgar name, and substitute the letter *y*, by means of which Smith became Smyth, which was a vast improvement.

Having thus become a landed proprietor, Mr. John Smyth sold his business to great advantage, and at once retired upon his estate of Smythville (so christened by Mrs. S.), where he immediately set up for a country gentleman, throwing aside all vulgar aspirations, and taking kindly to pursuits befitting his newly gained dignity.

Again did Mrs. Smyth stir up Mr. S. with a long pole, and successfully (he was so very obliging even when out of business). The matter was still but a little one—merely the addition of the letter e as a final to Smyth—which henceforth became Smythe, and the lady's ambition towards gentility advanced one trifle more. No sooner, however, had this little matter been arranged than her pride grew stronger with what it fed on. For having, by accident, seen in a newspaper the name of an Irish M.P. who spelt his name with the letter j in addition to that of y, she once more—and now finally—stirred Mr. S. up with a long pole, and the family name became henceforth, and for ever, "Smyjthe," which was about the highest point of dignity to which the original name could aspire.

When Mr. and Mrs. John Smyjthe entered upon what the lady termed her ancestral estate their family consisted of four sons, all well grown youths, the eldest being eighteen years of age, and the youngest twelve—John, the heir, as his mother called him, being at Eton, qualifying for an university career; and James, the youngest, with his brothers at boarding school.

Just at this time a sudden and overwhelming defeat of Ministers caused a dissolution of Parliament, and pocket boroughs became at a premium. The two members for Mr. Smyjthe's borough, Messrs. Noodle and Doodle, were thrown "out of collar."

With his usual eye to business, and desire to oblige somebody else as well as himself, Mr. J. Smyjthe kept a sharp look-out. He had his borough to *sell*, of course, but he had the three constituents of his borough—all

freeholders—to *buy*, before he could make any bargain at head-quarters.

The arrangement hitherto made had been that each freeholder should receive an annuity of five hundred pounds during the Parliamentary reign—fifteen hundred pounds a year—being a sort of rent-charge upon the estate, which must be advanced—*with interest*—by whichever section of Ministers might happen to rule, before the borough votes could be obtained.

Mr. John Smyjthe had well nigh made his bargain with Mr. Pitt when a little difficulty started up. It is well known there are two sides to any bargain, and it so happened in this.

Mr. John Smyjthe's three freeholders proved themselves—as true Britons always should—both free and independent, for they refused to sell themselves for a paltry five hundred pounds a year, in other words, *they struck for higher wages!*

Of course Mr. John Smyjthe was virtuously indignant—but he was powerless—the three “free and independent” would not sell their birthright for a mess of pottage! That is to say, they would not sell it under an extremely large mess indeed.

It was thus that Mr. Pitt and Mr. John Smyjthe were compelled to enter upon a little delicately arranged piece of diplomacy, resulting in this. The three “free and independent” electors each set up their “carriage-and-pair,” while plain Mr. Smyjthe became Viscount Smyjthe, of Smyjtheville; and his Viscountess had never more occasion to stir her lord up “with a

long pole," her ambition being perfectly satisfied. But stay.

It was now the Viscount's turn to become ambitious, *id est*, extra ambitious. He had become the head of a family, one of the landed lords of creation; he must make his name, his race, and his property secure beyond the reach of future disintegrity. He would entail his estate as strictly as the law would permit upon his heirs male—and did so—as tightly as possible; thereby giving *all* to one member of the family, and *nothing*—to be accurately divided—between all the rest.

But herein his provident wisdom failed lamentably, as the sequel will show. For three years all went well; his eldest son graduated honourably at college; but his other three died prematurely of fever, greatly to the grief of all; and on the very day after the one single hope of the family came of age, Viscount Smyjthe broke his neck on the hunting field through a defect of early training upon field sports, and thus the heir-in-tail became "lord of all he surveyed."

Shortly after this his mother died, and in due time the new Viscount married a lady of good birth, but no fortune, which brings this portion of our narrative to very nigh a close, for the next one-and-twenty years were entirely uneventful, except that they brought the Viscount and his lady two sons; the one named John, and the other James.

Whether by design or inadvertence we need not tell; the younger of these two brothers was not made acquainted with the fact that according to the law of

entail he would inherit nothing, while the elder inherited all.

This disagreeable fact came to his knowledge quite suddenly, and produced an extraordinary effect. Both brothers had been well educated, but were of diametrically opposite dispositions ; the elder being a gentleman in every respect, while the younger addicted himself to every low pursuit within the low reach of depravity ; a gambler, a dicer, a dog-fancier, and a rat-catcher, he associated only with blacklegs and horsey men. His mother had supplied his money wants, unknown to her eldest son, but when her death cut off the supplies he demanded his share, as he called it, of the family wealth—so that when the truth of the entail was made known to him, he launched out into a rage of invective which alarmed as well as horrified his elder brother.

We will not dwell upon the painful scenes which followed, but proceed to the *denouement*. Viscount Smyjthe had married, and two daughters were born, when Mr. James Smyjthe, disdaining the prefix of “Honourable,” avowed his determination to leave England for ever, on consideration of receiving ten thousand pounds in ready cash ; he also declared his intention of living under an assumed name, for reasons which he did not choose to explain, but which were judged to be both wise and cogent.

It was thus that Viscount Smyjthe became the sole representative of his name and race, a worthy gentleman, a happy husband—but, at the expiration of forty long

years, the father of no male heir—seven daughters only having been the issue of marriage.

This brings our narrative down to the commencing chapter, and ends the present.

CHAPTER II.

ELEVEN o'clock, striking from an ormolu pendule, roused Viscount Smyjthe from an unpleasant reverie, and determined him at once to open his letter, the contents of which were as follows :—

MY LORD,

I have the honour to acquaint your Lordship that the heir of your estate is found. After very great difficulty I have brought him to my house, where for the present he shall remain, for reasons which I can only mention to yourself.

I shall have the honour to add that within an hour after your receipt of this I will communicate all particulars at Smyjtheville Park.

Yours, &c.,

SOLOMON TAPE.

Thavies Inn, London,

April 17th, '73.

“In one hour’s time, then, I shall know the best or worst,” ejaculated the Viscount, as he once more put on his considering-cap. Meanwhile we must explain a little further.

The Viscount, as before told, had no son, but in lieu

thereof seven daughters, the oldest being forty years of age, and the youngest a little more than twenty.

Had these ladies been tolerably good looking, or had had marriage portions, it was just possible they might have obtained husbands in their own sphere, but, unfortunately, they happened to be hopelessly plain (the word "ugly" being, according to an American humorist, not applicable to any woman having two eyes, one mouth, one nose, and *not* two wooden legs), and absolutely portionless. The seven Misses Smyjthe were all spinsters, notwithstanding that they were amiable, talented, and educated at high pressure in all those accomplishments which make young ladies of the present age so formidable in domestic life.

Tall, angular, and hard featured, but still without wooden legs, the seven Misses Smyjthe had never been known to have attracted one single admirer bent on matrimony, and yet they were good girls, deeply attached to their parents—especially the eldest born—kind to the poor, and absolutely without any mental drawback. It was in vain that they dressed handsomely and in good taste; it was in vain that they danced well, talked well, and played "to distraction"—the gentleman visitors of their acquaintance, who ate their father's sumptuous dinners and drank his "comet" wine, or played croquet or accepted their pic-nic invitations, for not one amongst the many nibbled at the bait matrimonial, far less swallowed the hook.

The case was very hard upon seven thoroughly good young women, but so it was, and so it ever will be, that

mere personal worth, without some tinsel of beauty or gold, is powerless to command that admiration it truly merits.

Viscount Smyjthe had been in some measure compelled to live up to his income ; his daughters' education had been expensive, and the various attempts to "get them off" had also been a heavy cost, beside which the ladies had expensive tastes in the matter of jewellery, possibly with a view to counterbalance their lack of personal charms, and certain restrictions in the deed of entail prevented his cutting down any timber on the estate of less than eighty years' growth ; so that when the Viscount himself arrived at sixty years of age, he had the unpleasant knowledge that, should he die, his widow and children would all be without means of support unless the laws appertaining to entail should furnish such, and concerning which he knew nothing.

Pondering on this peculiar state of affairs, the Viscount had sometimes been tempted to altogether ignore the possible existence of a "heir-in-tail," seeing that for nearly forty years he had heard nothing of or from his brother James, who certainly left the country, according to threat, possibly under an assumed name, and had never since, so far as could be ascertained, been heard of again until now, *supposing the facts of his letter were true.*

While yet the Viscount wore his considering-cap, a rumble of wheels was heard, and in a few moments the powdered footman ushered in a gentleman, Mr. Solomon Tape.

The lawyer was an important-looking individual, of a

type fast disappearing from the sphere of society ; a family solicitor inheriting a large practice, and, therefore, not at all dependent on the caprice of fortune ; he was less an abstract lawyer than a personal friend, and Viscount Smyjthe had been most fortunate in obtaining his consideration as an adviser. He had been a college chum, and it had so come about.

Mr. Solomon Tape accosted his patron and client with a degree of pleasure and discomfiture singularly mixed, but perfectly discernible on his countenance. After the first compliments had passed, the Viscount addressed him—

“You have both good and bad news to communicate ; is it so ?”

“Yes,” replied the solicitor, “I have.”

“Tell me the best and worst without circumlocution ; you have found lineal descendants of my brother, James Smyjthe.”

“I have, and without the slightest flaw in the indictment ; one descendant only, a young man aged twenty or thereabout. I have copies of all marriage, baptismal, and burial certificates and registers. There is not the shadow of a doubt he is the true heir.”

“So far so well, I am glad of it ; and now, what is he like ? Is he an estimable personage, worthy to succeed to the family honours ? You look askance ? What can it mean ? Is he—is he a—a—gentleman ?”

“No. Far from it.”

“What then ? A mere tradesman perhaps ?”

“Worse than that.”

"Surely not a common artisan?"

"Worse still. I am ashamed to answer you."

"A beggar then! I feared some such eventuality. Tell me the truth. What is he?"

"Worse than even a beggar."

"Great Heaven! How can such be? What is he? One single word will be enough."

"A thief."

On hearing this terrible communication the poor Viscount bowed his head, and groaned aloud in utter humility and consternation, but he was doomed to bear it and much more beside, for every addendum to the first communication was but another link in the chain of abominations.

James Smith, ignoring the improvement on his true name, and utterly scorning the "Honourable" portion, had emigrated to America, abjured his former eccentricities, embarked in trade, and made some progress toward an honest life, when he formed a matrimonial speculation by marrying a low class woman with fifty thousand dollars and an abominable temper.

Within a year of his marriage he died, shot through the head in a drinking bar by the brother of his wife, so that the one child born after its father's death was the sole offspring. It was a boy, and his birth was duly registered as James Smith, son of James and Barbara Smith, &c., &c.

So far all was clear; Barbara Smith, the widow, rich in worldly goods, married a second time, her husband being a human brute who first spent all her money, and then

kicked her into the street with the helpless child of her first marriage, and no means of living.

Luckily, she had preserved all certificates, having had some inkling from her husband that the family was well off in England; and it is certain that she intended to bring her son to the old country, but fortune was against it. Do what she could the means were never raised for purchasing a passage, in those days somewhat expensive. She therefore took service in New Orleans, and contrived to educate her boy until in the tenth year of his age, when she died, leaving him nothing but a few papers wrapped in an old pocket book.

Deprived of parental care, young James Smith grew up a social pariah, doing odd jobs for a living till he was twenty years of age, when he too married a quadroon of the lowest type, who brought him one child into the world, the present "heir-in-tail," duly registered and certificated; after which its unfortunate father met nearly the same fate as his predecessor, for, having called a well-known scoundrel by an uncomplimentary name, he received a bowie-knife in his abdomen, which necessitated a coroner's inquest, the verdict being "sarved him right."

Our heir-in-tail, being then thrown upon the world parentless—for his mother left him in sheer disgust, he being a cripple—the poor child was adopted by an inmate of his father's house, who took possession of all that was left, including the family papers. It was not entirely through charity this deed was done, for the poor little orphan was a prodigy of ugliness, almost an

abortion ; but it grew up as strong as it was ugly, until in its tenth year the man and his wife who had adopted it conceived the idea of making it an exhibition, and embarked for England in consequence, landing at Liverpool, and making their way to London, where they arrived in the year 1853.

Fortune was against them, as it had ever been against the second branch of the Smith family. Young James Smith, though small and terribly ugly, was yet not ugly enough to command universal admiration. They tried to exhibit him in a penny show, but it did not pay ; and in disgust at their bargain they tied a label round his neck, put the family papers in the pocket of his tattered dress, and left him fast asleep one dark night at the door of St. Martin's Workhouse, to live or die as might happen.

Let philosophers say or write what they please, there seems to be a fatality, which is scarcely to be termed a Providence, attached to certain individuals in a way past understanding. This dolorous history of a seemingly fated race continued to follow in the same course as it began : James Smith, charitably taken in by the authorities of St. Martin's, received a workhouse education as a matter of course, but grew up too unsightly an object for apprenticing out—no one would have him. At sixteen years of age he was scarcely three feet six inches high, terribly bandy-legged, but as strong as a young lion and as sharp as a needle. His workhouse education had done nothing for his moral training, while the restrictions of the house galled his desire for liberty. What wonder,

then, that he ran away, or that the parish authorities did not advertise in hope to get him back again ?

James Smith found a patron almost immediately in the person of a showman whose bear had lately died. The showman in question found that Master James Smith would exactly fit the skin of his deceased animal, and a bargain was immediately struck.

So admirably did the resuscitated Bruin perform the antics of his race that none among an admiring crowd perceived the cheat. Bruin climbed a pole to the satisfaction of all beholders ; he would dance to perfection, and grunt a growl to the very life—too much so, indeed, for after a brief success the authorities of Scotland Yard put their veto upon the false Bruin as “ dangerous to the bystanders,” and the acknowledgment of its perfect safety did not mend the matter, for it was then condemned as a “ fraud,” and put down accordingly.

This was hard upon Master James Smith, most undeniably, for the living so gained was honest compared with that he was compelled to adopt. To make short of the matter, Master James Smith got introduced to a thieves’ fraternity, and became a thief in double quick time.

The disposition and talent for theft seemed to come upon him as a gift ; he felt it to be his vocation, and he gloried in it. He was successful, too, up to a certain point, when there came the police-court and one month’s imprisonment ; after that an interval of several months, when the quarter sessions took cognisance of him, and six months found him working at “ the crank ;” another

interval of a year sent him to the central criminal court, where he obtained "leave of absence" from society pursuits for the period of two years, during which time he led a very unpleasant life, until the inquiries of Mr. Solomon Tape ferreted him out, and a change for the better took place.

He was taken out of prison at the expiration of his term, and located in decent quarters for the first time in his life.

Mr. Solomon Tape had sent an envoy to America, who had traced out all that was necessary, ending with a visit to St. Martin's Workhouse, where the final confirmation, in the papers taken from him, was obtained—such as proved beyond all doubt who he was.

No link was missing from the chain of evidence ; and although more than one thousand pounds had been expended in the affair, it was brought to an issue at last, if only an extremely unpleasant issue indeed.

After this communication, with all its offensive details, had been laid before the awe-stricken Viscount, he thus addressed Mr. Solomon Tape—

"Does the fellow know who he is?"

"Not exactly," responded the solicitor. "He guesses he is somebody, but that is all."

"Is he capable of amendment?"

"That I cannot positively say. He is sharp enough as to his wits."

"What do you advise?"

"I should advise, to anyone but you, that he be left in ignorance to follow out his course ; and—"

"No, no! A thousand times no! He must be reclaimed—reformed."

"Of course. I knew you would say this—let us shake hands on it. Had you decided otherwise, I would have thrown you up. He must be reclaimed."

"But how?"

"I have anticipated your thoughts, and formed a plan."

"Speak it, for Heaven's sake. I am all attention."

"It is this. We must tell him he is somebody, but not all the particulars. Get him to undergo a course of moral and educational training, under a competent tutor, for a couple of years, at the expiration of which time he must be made to take his station, and be prepared for future contingencies. There is no other way."

"A thousand thanks. Would it be desirable for me to see him?"

"By no means."

"Why?"

"Because—because he needs much improvement; more than you can guess."

"So be it. I leave all to you."

It must here be notified that Mr. Solomon Tape had *not* told the Viscount those particulars which the reader alone knows. He had merely told sufficient to account for the predicament in which he had found the youth, hoping to effect so happy a change in the ensuing two years as might soften the asperities of the case. He was too large-hearted to inflict unnecessary pain, and so left his patron-client kindly in the dark, hoping, almost

against hope, that events would abet him in this charitable wish. The result will be found in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

EXACTLY two years after the last date, Viscount Smyjthe sat in the same arm chair as before—in the same library, and at the same hour, but with his lady beside him, awaiting the advent of Mr. Solomon Tape and his protégé, the “heir-in-tail,” who, having undergone his two years’ probation, was to become introduced to his relations for the first time.

The Viscount had aged greatly during the two years, his wife had shared his anxieties, as also had their seven daughters. Anticipations of a gloomy kind had sadly marred their social happiness, although, as by agreement, Mr. Solomon Tape had refrained from “reporting progress” during the interval.

Meanwhile, the solicitor had done his duty, as also had the tutor appointed to “lick the young bear into shape.” But the result was disheartening. Bruin would not submit. Masters of all kinds had tried their best. The dancing master gave him up—the creature could not be made to turn out its toes. The teacher of languages could not subdue its growl; the tailor could

not hide its bandy legs by the most ingenious art of cutting; and the "coiffeur" could not change bristles into decent hair. As for the unlucky tutor, he begged, with tears in his eyes, that if Mr. Solomon Tape should ever become possessed of another wild beast which required taming, he would charitably ignore his existence — even if one thousand pounds were at stake.

Altogether Mr. Solomon Tape foresaw a bad time in store for his aristocratic client, and would much rather have been swallowed up by an earthquake than have proceeded to his present duty.

Lawyers are, however, bound to obey "instructions," and so poor Mr. Solomon Tape proceeded to obey his by conveying the young heir of Smyjtheville to the home of his ancestors.

Exactly as two years before, the pendule struck eleven o'clock; and exactly as before, the same railway train brought its expectant freight to within a mile of the Viscount's home.

Another ten minutes brought the family carriage, which had been sent up, to the mansion door, and the heir of the Smyjthes, with Mr. Solomon Tape, entered the library.

It would be in vain to attempt conveying the slightest idea of the impression thrust upon the Viscount and his lady by the first view of their nephew; the reader may, however, judge for himself.

An ugly head, disproportionately large for a puny body, covered by a head of bristly hair, which stood out

like that of a broom, two legs bent like a pair of parentheses, and a pair of squinting eyes deeply set, which scintillated with a wicked fire, the whole compassed in a body just above four feet high, scarcely able to stand upright.

Of course such a creature could not walk, it could only waddle, and the apparition of Mr. Solomon Tape's portly figure beside so ugly a dwarf could not but raise comparison with a stately turkey-cock beside an ill-conditioned duck ; the effect was irresistible. Neither the Viscount nor his lady could suppress a laugh, which, though commenced in astonishment, culminated in sorrowful reproach.

Dismay and horror fell upon both. The unfortunate solicitor, alternately red and pale, could only utter the words, "Your nephew, my lord," and then utterly collapse into an arm chair, a very miserable solicitor indeed.

As for the young heir, now twenty-two years of age, all he could do was to make a humble attempt at a bow—which failed signally—inasmuch as it threw him face downward on the floor, from which he was raised to an upright position by the Viscount himself—with all imaginary tenderness—and placed upon a comfortable settee.

"So you are my nephew—the grandson of my brother, James Smyjthe, who emigrated to America many years ago," said the Viscount.

"And your heir-at-law," responded the Honourable James Smyjthe, as he must henceforth be called,

“ though you don’t appear to like the looks of me much ; eh, uncle ? ”

“ You are—as God made you—my nephew and heir, according to law. You are also my guest, and I welcome you accordingly.”

“ Welcome ! Oh, yes ; a pretty welcome, truly, to laugh in my face. But my turn for laughing will come some day, never fear.”

“ Allow me to introduce you to your aunt, my wife, the Viscountess Smyjthe,” again spoke his Lordship, attempting to take the young man’s hand ; but that young gentleman, finding his legs better fitted for sitting than for walking, declined to rise, and merely nodded his head in recognition, looking, at the same time, about as amiable as the proverbial bear with the sore head.

Before proceeding further, it may be as well to state that, as regards our “heir-in-tail,” the semi-education forced upon him had in no way altered his nature for the better ; the supplying of all his wants had not made him less a thief than before ; and kindness had not tamed his savage nature. The term “kleptomania,” invented to shield the misdoings of respectable plagiarists, was, for him, a true vice ; and kindness was a thing he had met so little of in his early career that he failed to understand it, thinking it only a cover for quite the reverse. Again, the ugliness, of which he was painfully conscious, instead of inducing him to counterbalance his deformity by suavity of demeanour, only seemed to make him aggravate its intensity by way of bravado—for he positively revelled in his own offensiveness—enjoying

the very horror he inspired, or seeming, at least, so to do. He had also learned all his expectations and rights, so that, being fully primed with the insolence of power, he appeared determined to exert it to the uttermost.

Having thus clearly defined the character of our hero, let us proceed.

"You need fear no disparagement on the part of myself or family," spoke the Viscount. "It is our wish you should be treated with all possible respect and consideration while under this roof, so make yourself perfectly comfortable."

"I intend," responded the young man. "This place will be mine, by right, some day—if it is not exactly so now—and a jolly comfortable 'crib' it seems."

"The house is well enough, and the estate unburthened. Should you ever come into possession, a dozen or so years hence, you——"

"A dozen years ! what the devil do you mean ? Why, you are an old man now."

"I am past sixty," replied the Viscount, with evident annoyance, "but may live a dozen years yet."

"My husband is still in his prime," ejaculated the Viscountess ; "if you desire to be thought a gentleman you will refrain from making objectionable remarks."

"Oh ! Ah !" responded the amiable youth, "I a gentleman ! Of course I am—a Viscount's nephew must be a gentleman ! Was not I born so?—don't I look like one ? Ha ! Ha !"

"You don't behave like one," rejoined the irate lady ;

“so please to modify your expressions if you desire to obtain the consideration our family intend paying.”

“Consideration, did you say? Do you call it consideration to keep a fellow without grub after jolting in a railway train for three hours?”

“Ah!” observed the Viscount, “I had quite forgotten. Mr. Solomon Tape, may I ask the favour of you to accompany this—this—gentleman to the breakfast-room; you will find everything prepared as ——”

At this point, and before the Viscount was enabled to finish his sentence, a slight scream from her Ladyship arrested his attention. She had fainted, at the horror of young Smyjthe’s presence or behaviour—or possibly at some demoniacal look—and it was the sustaining arm of her husband alone which prevented her falling on the ground.

A sharp blow from Mr. Solomon Tape on the silver table-bell summoned the attendance of two liveried footmen, so quickly as to imply the possibility of their having been listening at the door.

“Assistance, quick,” shouted his Lordship, “send in my daughters.”

And immediately, not in single file, but all together, the seven Misses Smyjthe came rushing in; they had evidently been waiting, at the utmost stretch of curiosity, for the first glimpse of their extraordinary relative, if indeed they had not already condescended to question the servants who had helped him to alight.

Crowding round their mother, the seven young ladies evinced the deepest commiseration, and, assisted by the

two footmen, speedily conveyed her out of the room, bending looks of withering contempt upon the miserable abortion who had brought on the calamity.

No sooner was her Ladyship conveyed away than the Viscount, without vouchsafing one single word to his nephew, motioned a servant to show the young man to his breakfast ; and, taking Mr. Solomon Tape by the arm, drew him away for a private conference.

The mansion known as "Smyjtheville," but only so called since being occupied by its new possessor, had been erected by an eccentric nobleman who delighted in large rooms for himself and aristocratic friends ; but thought small rooms better fitted for menials. It therefore contained a few large apartments only, and a vast number of smaller ones. The present family numbering no less than eight females, it was impossible to provide each with a separate boudoir ; consequently the ladies had appropriated one large apartment in common, called "the Ladies' Room," and it was to this that the fainting Viscountess was conveyed.

"The Ladies' Room" was a kind of luxurious curiosity shop, containing two pianos, a harp, several easels, almost a library of books, cabinets, tables, fitted with "bric-a-brac," portfolios, pictures, and every other appurtenance appertaining to art, taste, or luxury, together with lounges, settees, &c., &c., in admired profusion. It was an apartment held sacred to the ladies of the house, and was never meant to be intruded on by the gentlemen visitors.

It is a singular fact that ladies, who are a very long

time "coming to" in the presence of gentlemen, very rapidly find themselves restored to consciousness in the presence of their own sex. Eau de Cologne had been plentifully applied to her Ladyship, immediately that she was placed reclining on a settee, and had a rapid effect. Looking around her, and finding no "hideous monster," but in place of such, only her seven daughters, the Viscountess gave vent to her indignation and horror in no measured phrase, amidst a chorus of lamentation from her seven sustainers.

It would not be to the edification of our readers that we should record the unpolite expressions to which even ladies can give utterance when excited by extraordinary causes; on the present occasion hard words were feeble to express the horror, the disgust, and terrible fears which the sight of their relative had inflicted upon them; all of which were aggravated by the knowledge that it was just within possibility that their future existence might depend on the power of such a frightful monster.

We must, however, describe the seven young ladies— young, some of them, by courtesy only—before we proceed further. Arabella, the eldest, now in her forty-third year, was tall, gawky, and very angular indeed, slightly pitted with the smallpox; her features were decidedly coarse, but certainly not repellent, for her eyes were good, and her mouth, though firmly compressed, had an expression of kindness and firmness combined which bespoke at once a tender and a strong nature. Moreover she was extremely accomplished—deep in all the "ologies," particularly in phrenology and physiognomy—a

circumstance which held some of her few friends in awe.

Miss Julia, Miss Elizabeth, Miss Thomasine, Miss Theodora, and Miss Mary were all and each after their eldest sister's type, though not pitted like her, but somewhat less audaciously learned, and certainly much more companionable. It was reserved for the youngest lady of the family to put in some little pretensions to good looks, and it was to the possibility of their newly-found cousin choosing her for a wife that their mother had looked with hope, but only before they had seen him, and, of course, before they had any notion of his being what he was ! All seven of the sisters, however, knew the contingency which might arise in the event of their father's death, and all seven felt their terrible position, almost to the verge of a foolish despondency.

All were devotedly attached to their parents, but Arabella, the eldest born, had a degree of veneration for her father greatly exceeding the natural love of a child for a parent ; she partook of all his cares, entered into all his thoughts, and would have suffered martyrdom to save him from an hour's anxiety ; it was she who, far beyond all others, entered into the difficulty of his position, and who saw in the present deadlock of his hopes a terrible fatality in store, which could only be averted by some very strong measure indeed.

All, however, felt the horrors of their position, and when their mother had sufficiently recovered began making comments in anticipation of the worst that could happen, after a manner which savoured of the serio-comic,

almost regarding it in the light of a possibility rather than a fact.

It was the youngest daughter who first discharged the artillery of her indignation.

“So that is the creature I am expected to marry—an ape!”

“A bear,” suggested one other young lady.

“A something worse than either,” exclaimed another sister. “An ape might be taught to bow, and a bear to dance; that thing can do neither.”

“A truce to this badinage,” cried Arabella; “the question is, what can we do? For the present nothing that I can see, except bear with the infliction till something definite occurs.”

“Nothing definite can alter the gravity of the situation,” spoke the Viscountess; “that miserable abortion is heir-at-law. Should my dear husband, your father, die—Oh! horror!”

“We should be all thrust upon the world penniless, I suppose,” exclaimed Miss Elizabeth.

“No,” answered Arabella, “not quite. It is lucky we each possess a little fortune in our jewels. Mine are worth three thousand pounds; they are personalties, and cannot pass away from us with the estate.”

“Mine are worth two thousand,” cried another sister.

“And mine.”

“And mine.”

“We should not be obliged, then, to go out as governesses,” spoke another sister.

“Nor as lady’s maids.”

"Nor our dear mother be compelled to turn a mangle," interposed the youngest lady, with a degree of flippancy which contrasted ill against the seriousness of their position.

"A truce to all this," again spoke Miss Arabella. "Our father's state of mind demands that we all give our best sympathy, which can only be accorded by waiting patiently on events; as for anyone of us marrying such a creature as we have seen, it is out of all question, and yet—

"And yet what?" cried the youngest lady.

"I almost think that if such a contingency were absolutely of avail to save our dear father I would descend, Curtius-like, into the gulf matrimonial myself."

"What! and marry that wretch?" exclaimed several voices at once.

"Even so."

"Perhaps, my dears, he may ask no one of you," interposed the Viscountess. "For my own part, as well as yours, I would be content to sink into the most abject poverty rather than live an hour under the sway of such a monster; but you all seem to forget that your father may live, as I trust he will, many years yet—meanwhile, the monster may die."

"Heaven grant it," somewhat uncharitably exclaimed two sisters at once.

"Let us end this unprofitable talk," once more, and for the last time, interposed the eldest lady, "I will ponder over contingencies, and perhaps may hit upon some mode of extrication none of you will ever guess at."

CHAPTER IV.

AFTER a consultation, the nature of which will transpire, Viscount Smyjthe entered the breakfast-room, where the object of their solicitude had been taking his coveted refreshment in the shape of a luxurious meal.

They found that young gentleman completely at his ease, sitting cross-legged upon a very capacious chair, and smoking a long clay pipe which he had obtained from one of the servants, after demolishing almost everything set before him by three footmen, whose well-bred demeanour was sadly taxed to keep within decent bounds.

It was painfully evident that education had failed to eradicate the vile habits of his early youth, and that he felt a diabolical pleasure in making himself as utterly objectionable as his great talents in that line permitted.

"So ! you have come to see the creature at feeding time," exclaimed the abortion, with a horrible squint of his wicked eyes.

"We have come to see if you are properly attended to," replied the Viscount.

"Only a litter of straw wanted for the creature to wallow in," again spoke the young man, nothing softened in his hard nature.

"Nay," once more spoke the Viscount, courteously, "we have given you no cause to doubt our good will, so be generous enough to respond."

A look bestowed on the three servants being under-

stood, all of them left the apartment, leaving uncle, solicitor, and nephew to themselves.

Somewhat ashamed, or possibly a little softened by his uncle's quiet manner, the Honourable Mr. James Smyjthe flung away his long clay pipe, which shivered to pieces on the Turkey carpet, unclasped his bandy legs, and listened to what might next be said, fully anticipating that a proposal of some kind was about to be made.

In this he was quite correct, for the solicitor and his patron had mutually arranged a proposition, which Mr. Solomon Tape proceeded, with all imaginary delicacy, to unfold.

In effect that, as the law of entail prohibited any portion of the estate to be alienated or in any way deteriorated by the sale of timber, &c., &c., or any part set aside for the support of female branches otherwise than out of its possessor's legitimate income, it was proposed that Mr. James Smyjthe should consent to such modification of his prospective interests as should admit of such a provision for his aunt and cousins, in the event of contingencies, as should enable them to live in comparative comfort—in consideration of which the Viscount would award an allowance of two thousand pounds per annum to his nephew until such time as the estate might fall to him as heir-in-tail.

This proposition, put into legal form, was placed before the young gentleman neatly engrossed on a sheet of foolscap paper, and an answer expected by the following morning, after he might have given it some hours' consideration.

In a legitimate five-act comedy upon the stage it would have been "refreshing" to have seen the amount of indignant rage evinced by a competent actor in such a part, but, on the illegitimate stage of real life, the rage of Mr. James Smyjthe was simply ridiculous.

The miserable creature, who had listened to the proposition with impatience, rashly stood up on its hind legs, and, after nearly falling through the attempt, seized the written paper and immediately tore it to atoms, shouting, rather than speaking, "What! sell my birth-right for a mess of pottage? Never! No! I will be My Lord Viscount, with everything belonging to the estate, from its biggest horse down to its smallest mouse. So, there now! you have my answer without waiting until to-morrow."

"Indeed!" replied Mr. Solomon Tape, "and pray—how do you intend to live between now and the time you will have to wait for your inheritance? recollect, the law makes no provision for you any more than for others."

"By help of the Jews," responded he. "Do you fancy I don't know what a 'post obit' means, or why did you make that old fogey, my tutor, teach me Latin, eh?"

"If you have learned any Latin, you have failed to learn common decency or common sense. The Jews may accommodate you, on certain terms, possibly, but they know, as well as yourself, that twenty years may elapse before you inherit the estate."

"Fudge, I know better; hark ye, Mr. Lawyer. If I have not learnt manners, as you say, I have learnt something else; for I have found out that my uncle there has

been refused an insurance on his life, because he has not two years' breath in his body. Ha ! ha !"

"Scoundrel," ejaculated the Viscount, "and you are my nephew, whom I have picked up out of the gutter—rescued from a jail."

"Yes," screamed Mr. James Smyjthe, "but your heir-at-law for all that ; so, no more humbug—I know what I know."

"Is this true?" whispered the solicitor.

"Unfortunately it is—though how he obtained the knowledge I cannot say."

"We must cry a truce, then, to all hostilities, and reflect," again whispered Mr. Solomon Tape.

"What are you whispering there?" spoke the Hon. Mr. James Smyjthe, with an air of suspicion.

"We are considering what course to pursue as well for your benefit as for ours. If you persist in your ungrateful resolution, you may do your best or worst, but as you do not appear to want the power of reasoning, just please to consider that there are contingencies on your side as well ; the law may yet take hold of you, for I happen to know that there yet remains one little unsettled account which you may yet have to pay. Two thousand pounds a year will enable you to live abroad—in Paris or Brussels—where you can do as you please. I, therefore, counsel you to take one night for consideration—tomorrow you decide."

"I suppose I must," muttered the heir, who was fully conscious of the little matter hinted at, which was the extreme probability of his further imprisonment.

"Meanwhile," spoke the Viscount, almost crushed beneath his own humiliation, "you will please to comport yourself before the ladies as befits a—a—gentleman."

"A gentleman ! Oh ! Ah ! Of course, who shall dare call me otherwise, now that I am heir apparent to a nobleman ? You *call* me a gentleman, but *think* me a beast. Can you not find someone to put me in a wheelbarrow, and tumble me over the estate ?"

"You shall go in a carriage-and-pair whenever you please ; but, once more, strive to be a little less ungenerous."

With these words the solicitor took the Viscount's arm within his own, and gently led him out of the apartment—a man of sorrow, more humbled in his determination to do what was right than he had ever considered it possible to be.

A carriage-and-pair was immediately ordered, and the Hon. Mr. James Smyjthe was taken for a long drive. Meanwhile, a family consultation became held, in which it was agreed that no notice should be taken of what was past, that their objectionable guest should be treated with all possible indulgence, and that the ladies, in particular, should suppress their antagonism under cover of extreme politeness, the servants of the family being especially commanded to be on their best behaviour under all circumstances.

It was a bitter pill which the Viscountess and her seven daughters had individually to swallow, but they saw the position in which a cruel fortune had

placed them, and bowed to it accordingly. As for the strong-minded eldest born—she who loved her father beyond the common love of a daughter—she pondered and pondered, bringing her powerful intellect to bear upon the situation with a power that neither her father nor his solicitor contemplated. Not that she saw any sure way out of the wilderness of circumstances, but that she determined, if possible, to cut a path where none was made before, if no other way was left open; but *how*, required her best deliberation.

As for the Viscount himself, his irresolute mind sought comfort in the privacy of the ladies' room, where, surrounded by his sympathising family, he bowed his head in silence, a prey to good intentions, acting, apparently, for ill rather than good; more sorrowful than ashamed, but still with an inner consciousness of having acted like an honourable man.

A more united household than that of our Viscount never existed. Father, mother, and children were all of one mind—no jealousies, no quarrels, no differences of opinion ever occurred to mar their unity of thought; and happy would have been the man or men who could have overlooked the terrible plainness of any or all of the seven sensible women who so patiently awaited the offers matrimonial which never, never came, some small exception being taken to the youngest girl, who, by virtue of her comparative youth, still hoped for that which might possibly arrive.

As before told, all these ladies possessed jewels of worth, for reasons before enumerated, but the very cost

of which, together with that of their education, had prevented their father from setting aside any portion of his income to meet such a contingency as now appeared imminent. It was wisely, therefore, if only tacitly, conceded that every member of the family group should pay the same attention to their unwelcome relative as if he were the noblest and the best of the land. Consequently, when the time arrived for the ceremony of dinner, the house steward was commanded to set forth the family plate in all its abundance, to deck the table with flowers, and to put forth the choicest wines, all of which was scrupulously attended to, so that when the Hon. Mr. James Smyjthe returned from his carriage drive all was in readiness except that gentleman himself, who could only be prevailed on to change his dress by Mr. Solomon Tape, who, knowing the great interests at stake, positively superintended the ordering of his evening costume, aided by a valet of the Viscount's, who was in his entire confidence.

On descending to the ante-room of the dining apartment Mr. Smyjthe presented himself to the ladies arrayed in a swallow-tailed coat very short in the waist, a pair of unmentionables which, despite all the cunning of an artiste-tailor, only served to display the deformity of his legs, a waistcoat of all the hues in the rainbow, a necktie of gorgeous size and colour, with a watch-chain as large as that of a moderate-sized kedge anchor.

Not even this apparition could move the Viscountess and her daughters into the semblance of a smile, and it was therefore with some very little less than his accustomed

spitefulness that he awaited the formation of a procession towards the dining room. But here arose a difficulty.

The proverbial *mauvais quart d'heur* having been dispensed with, who should have the *honour* to become their guest's escort?

The Viscount would not permit his wife to suffer such a humiliation; the Gordian knot was, however, cut by Mr. Solomon Tape, who perceived the difficulty, and, with a look towards his host, convoyed that lady himself; but no one of the seven young ladies appeared covetous of the honour which was clearly the lot of some one. A moment of indecision occurred, and then the eldest daughter, like a true heroine as she was, quietly linked her arm, stooping greatly the while, with that of her terrible cousin, and carried him off, if not in triumph, still a captive in every sense of the word, her sisters following in Indian file.

Arrived at the dinner table, the Hon. Mr. James Smyjthe was fairly dazzled with the display before him. He had never seen the like—silver plate everywhere, wax candles throwing a mild light, flowers emitting their perfume, servants in rich liveries, crystal glass reflecting prismatic rays, all united flung upon his vision a radiance of astonishment which fairly blinded him.

Seated at the table on a high chair, cushioned for his use, he cast his wondering eyes around, surveying the ladies with rude stare, by no means approving, till his glances fell on the eldest of the family, Miss Arabella, who, strange to relate, sat covered with jewellery till the diamonds on her neck, her head, and arms formed a

galaxy of light which threw all else into the shade, *no other lady of the family wearing any jewellery at all.*

His eyes lit up with a blaze of wicked light—he had seen diamonds before, plenty of them, in various jewellers' shops, and had longed to possess some, even at the risk of burglary, but his talents in that line were not ripe. He had seen, admired, longed for, but never possessed a diamond in all his life ; but now he felt conscious he was heir apparent to a thousand diamonds, or diamonds' worth. The looks he had cast on those of his cousin were noted well—as even perhaps they had been calculated on—as we shall see.

The dinner passed off, as may be supposed. The Hon. Mr. James Smythe had learned how to avoid any very gross breach of etiquette, for he had dined at restaurants and tables d'hôte in Brussels as well as elsewhere, but with his seventh glass of wine the latent grossness of his tastes began to develop, and the ladies made a discreet as well as precipitate retreat before the dessert came on.

When left to themselves, the Viscount and Mr. Solomon Tape commanded the servants to move the dessert to a table near the fire, the weather being yet cold, and it was their policy to prevent their guest from still further committing himself, but to no avail.

The small quantity of wine he had imbibed began to take effect. Efforts were made to preventing him from taking still more, but his keen eyes saw the intention. He refused to become discreet ; insisted on drinking "the ladies," firstly ; "the memory of Jack Sheppard,"

secondly; and “our noble selves,” thirdly, till his disgusted host threatened his forcible removal, which was only prevented by the solicitor, who counselled prudence.

This could not, however, proceed much further. The Hon. James Smyjthe having drank till he was mad, first volunteered a song, and afterwards a hornpipe between a dozen wine glasses, which he placed upon the floor and finally attempted to dance between, but, falling down, broke them into a hundred pieces, cutting his face and hands in the futile attempt to rise again, till, in utter prostration, he was carried to bed by a couple of footmen, who contrived to strap up his wounds with court plaster.

CHAPTER V., AND LAST.

It was past twelve o'clock on the following day before the Viscount, after a few brief hours of troubled sleep, awoke to all the miseries of his position, and he was surprised to hear that his hopeful nephew had been already up for several hours, also that the wounds on his face, strapped up with black plaster, had not prevented him from ordering a carriage and four horses—nothing less would do—and postilion for a drive round the estate.

He was, however, still more surprised and very much more alarmed when he learned that his eldest daughter had accompanied him, covered with jewellery, as she had appeared on the evening before.

What could this mean? Overwhelmed with astonishment, and still more with fear, the Viscount questioned his other daughters, who could give no further explanation than that she had some object in view, and gave orders that a couple of mounted grooms should follow the carriage at some small distance.

Mr. Solomon Tape, who had been up betimes, said that the abortion had appeared in a wonderful good temper—almost amiable—and that Miss Smyjthe, who volunteered to accompany him, had evidently something in view, which puzzled him completely. He had seen them depart immediately after breakfast, and only awaited his Lordship's company to follow in their wake on horseback.

"By all means, and instantly," exclaimed his Lordship, who went to a window which overlooked the carriage drive, and most anxiously peered out.

Before horses could be saddled for this expedition, his Lordship's anxious eyes caught sight of something which frightened him even more than the intelligence just recorded. Afar off, at nigh a mile's distance, he descried a carriage with four horses, driving rapidly down the long avenue, seemingly without postilions.

With his eyes strained, and his heart beating wildly, the Viscount watched and watched till his aching sight

almost failed him in the excess of his excitement. At length "Something has happened," was his exclamation, and hurrying down, in company with his solicitor, the Viscount reached the entrance hall.

Something had truly happened, for the carriage approached, the horses at full speed, with no postilion on their backs, and one of the grooms driving on the box.

The horses did not appear unmanageable, but were driven quickly and soon approached the entrance hall, where a dozen domestics awaited the event.

Two minutes more and the carriage drove up ; half-a-dozen strong arms secured the horses' heads, and in one moment the door of the vehicle was opened, disclosing Miss Smyjthe in a fainting condition, and covered with blood, between the two postilions who tended her.

We will not attempt to picture the scene which immediately ensued. How the father raved, how the solicitor swore, and how the servants *en masse* uttered execrations while they lifted out the nigh lifeless body of their favourite mistress, and consigned her to the care of her mother and sisters.

A narrative of the events which resulted in this catastrophe is as follows, gathered from the lady herself when recovered from her perilous condition.

It appears that the Hon. Miss Smyjthe, with her accustomed clearness of perception, had detected her cousin's trifling moral weakness of "kleptomania," and laid her plans accordingly, with the decidedly mischievous, if not wicked, intention of tempting him to break the laws against "meum and tuum," so that he might possibly

bring himself within their ban, thereby compromising himself into a mood for some amicable settlement of affairs.

She saw his wicked eyes catch the bait at dinner time ; she saw him gloat at her diamonds purposely worn, and knew that when opportunity came he would attempt to steal them, for "thief" was written on his skull in characters too large to be concealed.

On knowing that her cousin had ordered his "carriage-and-four," she commanded the servants to obey instantly, and armed herself with fortitude to accompany him, decked out as before described.

She little contemplated what eventually occurred ; a dreamy notion of some indefinite kind led her to think the inborn thief would attempt a robbery, which one of her attendants witnessing would be in time to frustrate, and so bring the villain within the grasp of the law, but she failed to probe all the wickedness of the monster's nature.

He had commanded the postilion to draw up close to a woody copse, where on the day previous he had seen some felled timber, and several tall elm trees overshadowing the brushwood.

Descending from the vehicle, he waddled beside his cousin to a space somewhat clearer than the rest, and imperatively bade her sit down beside him.

With a beating heart she obeyed ; the crisis had come, but scarcely in the form she had contemplated, for no servitors were within sight, and the fiendish eyes of the monster shone with a savage light which meant mischief.

"Give me your hand," he exclaimed, rudely compelling her to accede. "That is a pretty ring. Diamonds? Ah! sparkles. Will it fit me?"

"Take it and try, but let me go," she replied, now thoroughly frightened at his looks.

"Not without the other, and that necklace, and that brooch," he replied, literally tearing off both necklace and brooch before her trembling hands could prevent or her attempted screams bring assistance, his hands being placed over her mouth.

"Those earrings too," he exclaimed, releasing one hand from her mouth, whereby she uttered one long piercing scream, and then lapsed into insensibility.

The scream was heard, and the two grooms advanced to her assistance—which seeing, the wretch violently snatched both earrings from her delicate ears, tearing the flesh and covering her raiment with blood.

What may have been his calculations, if he had any, or the force of nature which could not be controlled, it is impossible to say; but the deed was done, and its consequences either never contemplated or altogether ignored, for seeing assistance arrive, and not choosing to be punished summarily, he thrust his treasures into the pocket of his coat and scrambled up an elm tree, more than eighty feet high, with the agility of a monkey or a squirrel—laughing, as he ascended, a fiendish laugh of derision and contempt.

Luckily, the two grooms were old servants of their master, and sensible fellows both; they immediately conveyed their lady to the carriage, still in a fainting fit, and,

deputing the postilion to keep her safe, one of the grooms mounted the coach box to drive home, while the other kept watch beneath the elm tree, to hold the thief secure until assistance should arrive.

And assistance came, more quickly than anticipated, for one half-hour brought the Viscount himself, together with Mr. Solomon Tape and a posse of domestics, all fully determined to capture or avenge, as might happen.

By this time it is presumable that the Hon. Heir-at-law began to see the error he had committed, and the false position into which he had brought himself, but it was too late. Still he would not be captured by his pursuers, whose threatening looks hungered to tear him to pieces, like as hounds might tear a captured fox. No ! He would defeat them all, defy them, jeer at them.

"Come up and pull the monkey down by his tail," roared the abortion. "Cowards ! fools ! Ha ! Ha !"

"Come down, or I will shoot you like a dog," cried the Viscount.

"And be hanged for murder," replied the abortion. "Ha ! Ha ! A pretty sight to see hanging at the end of a rope at the Old Bailey."

"Come down, or we will find means to make you," exclaimed Mr. Solomon Tape.

"Not such a fool as I look," responded the wretch.

"Then we will proceed to compel you," again threatened the lawyer ; "is there anyone here can climb that tree?"

"I can," answered one of the gamekeepers, "and will too ; so here goes."

With this the strong active fellow began to ascend the tree, and quickly gained the branch young Smyjthe had made his stronghold—much to that young gentleman's astonishment, as well as consternation, he having bargained for nothing of the kind.

Leaping above, he quickly distanced his pursuer, but only to be again approached by his active foe, who had almost reached him when, with a sudden bound, the man-monkey attempted to leap from one branch on to another, missed his hold, and with a shriek toppled down headlong seventy feet, breaking every bone in his ugly body and crushing his carcase almost to a jelly.

Thus ends the "Heir-in-tail"—a story of to-day, yesterday, and possibly of to-morrow, unless justice and humanity should step between to abolish the unnatural law which has ruined thousands upon thousands of outraged sons and daughters—sacrificed on the altar of an insane pride.

LEGENDS OF SAINTS AND SINNERS.

No. I.—SAN GIOVANNI SECONDO.

PREPARATORY REMARK.

The quaint old legend upon which the following tale is founded was originally related (*in canine latin*) by a somewhat unlettered monk named Francesco Xairese, who died about the commencement of the fourteenth century, and who *might*, therefore, have been personally cognisant of that one most remarkable incident which forms the crowning point of his history, although he must of necessity have been indebted to tradition for what preceded it. Be the exact facts what they may, Father Xairese must stand God-father to them, inasmuch that they rest upon his *dictum scribendum*, as he himself has elsewhere elegantly expressed, and may be rendered briefly as follows:—

“No sooner had Urban the Fifth ascended the Pontifical throne than he was prevailed on by the golden arguments of one Philipo Grimaldi, a rich Councillor of State, to award the supreme honours of canonisation to his late father or grandfather, Francisco Grimaldi, who fell sixty years previously in a skirmish which proved fatal to a notorious robber chieftain, named Giovanni Poablo, whose capture and maltreatment of good Pope Innocent during the year 1201 is an exploit still regarded with pious horror by all true Catholics.”

According to the original legend Pope Innocent caused a procession to be made towards that part of the forest land which skirted upon the eastern side of the Appian Way, in which reposed the bones of, not only the illustrious Grimaldi, but also of the notorious Giovanni Poablo, who after having been very properly “hanged” was very improperly “buried” almost side by side with his conqueror.

The procession duly arrived at the place of its destination, a skeleton was exhumed—was carried in great state to the Imperial city, and there, amidst the acclamations of the populace and the benedictions of the Church—canonised in

all due form, after which the bones themselves were ensconced under a crystal dome, and placed upon a sarcophagus in the Church of San Giovanni.

Two years afterwards—and not until several miracles had been wrought through the agency of those same bones—a prying sceptic, somewhat after (or rather before) the fashion of Professor Owen, whose matter-of-fact notions had caused him to be regarded with considerable disfavour by the religious authorities of Rome, contrived to ascertain, beyond all possible doubt, that the illustrious personage whose supposed remains were thus honoured, had gone to his early tomb minus three fingers of his left hand, through an accident in youth, but which fact had been overlooked on the present occasion, inasmuch as “The Saint” was found to possess his full complements of digits. Hence the inference suggesting itself was no less startling than disagreeable, being indeed no other than this, namely—that His Holiness the Pope, their Eminences the Cardinals, and their Reverences the whole Church conclave, had made a most ludicrous mistake—by canonising the *wrong gentleman*.

Thus far our chronicle. What more remains is of little consequence, and might as well have been shrouded in obscurity, but for one little episodal incident, showing the *ingenuity* of the Catholic Church, which, never at a loss for invention, chose to ignore all possibility of having mistaken the bones of Grimaldi for those of Giovanni, by at once advancing a new miracle, to wit, that the three supplementary fingers in question were a special interposition of Providence, &c., vouchsafed in order that a saint so illustrious should not enter Heaven otherwise than un mutilated ! Comment on this would be as superfluous as indecent. We will have none of it.

LEGEND.

I.

In the year of Our Lord twelve hundred and one,
 When England was ruled by that profligate son-
 Of-a-Gun—King John—who tried to “poke fun”
 At the Knights and the Barons who met him at Run-
 Nynead, and thus proved that they would not be “done;”

But instead thereof
 Made his Majesty laugh
 On that side (to make shortish a story that's long)
 Of his mouth by small witlings entitled "the wrong."
 There lived in th' imperial City of Rome
 A Pope, who made its Palace his home,
 One "INNOCENT" styled—we won't venture to say,
 In that very significant manner of way
 On account of his deeds, but because 'twas a fashion
 That Popes should be guiltless of all human
 passion.

II.

Be this as it may—we at once may declare
 Pope Innocent's vices were almost as rare
 As his virtues were great,
 A thing which to state
 May have with posterity very much weight.
 For that—no matter—suffice to tell
 He enacted the "ruler" exceedingly well,
 Encouraging those who to good deeds might keep
 By dubbing them "Saints"—as judicious as cheap,
 Imposing such penance on nobles and kings
 As made crime and cruelty very *dear* things,
 For he made every sinner who chanced to have pelf
 Come "down with the dust," which he laid on a shelf,
 Devoting, no doubt, to such purposes good
 As made him well loved, if not well understood—
 A "lie" cost some "twopence" of their current cash ;
 A "swindle" cost "threepence" and blows from the lash ;

A "murder" cost "tenpence"—if done by a clown,
But if by a Monarch sometimes half-a-crown ;
In short, so advanced was the tariff on crime
That virtue "protected" grew almost sublime,
Except in such bye-ways

Apart from life's high-ways
As villains will sometimes select for their sly-ways.

And one there was, we grieve to tell,
Not far from the sound of St. Peter's Bell,
Which then, as now, gave forth its knell,
Though not from Buonorotti's cell—

A noted thief—(we heed not how,
But thieves existed then as now)
And one whom History grieves to say
Had been a Churchman in his day,
But having sadly gone astray
Forgot entirely how to pray,
And threw, at last, his cowl away !
Wearing instead—a jacket of red,
With buttons all down it—a cap on his head ;
And garters laid o'er
His legs by the score,
Like the Brigands of Eastlake, and others before.

III.

This Brigand was tall—this Brigand was stout,
And had an old Mother, who knew beyond doubt
Whenever her son was at home or "out,"
For she minded his home, and mended his clothes,
She cook'd all his victuals, and did as she chose

With all of his followers—also with those
Who came—nolens volens—their wealth to disclose.
For *he* robbed each passer—young, old—short, or tall,
Of money, of jewels—of clothing—of all—
Then——dash'd out their brains if they ventured to
squall.

IV.

At length, he so throve in his horrible trade,
And grew to such wealth on the plunder he made,
That an age of refinement, like this of our own,
Had made him a Peer, if it gave not a throne ;
No Peasant escaped with ought but his skin,
No Maid came back without taint of sin,
No Burgher laden with silk and gold
Returned from his haunt till bought and sold,
No Priest, on errand of shrift or prayer,
But showed red stripes on his shoulders bare,
A mocking sight
For a Pope of might
And very, exceedingly un-polite.

V.

At length came a pass, which nigh was more
Than mortal patience ever bore.
An Envoy—from the English King,
On golden tribute bound,
Escaped, with scarce the power to fling
His corse upon the ground,
A mangled, bleeding, senseless thing
With death in every wound,

Escaped—from Giovanni's knife—we've said, but please
to mind,
His wounded body only fled—his CASH was left behind !

VI.

“ Up, up, my Priests,—with Book and Bell
“ And taper, quickly come,”
The good Pope spoke, with aspect fell,
“ Go—summon trump and drum,
“ I'll hunt the hunter in his lair,
“ The tiger in his den,
“ The hounds of Hell I'll summon there.”
His followers chimed “ Amen.”

VII.

Behold they go—with pike and bow,
With taper and with Bell,
Behold they come—with trump and drum
They search the forest well.
They search it high, they search it low
Their banners flutter like a show ;
The Bell is rung—the chant is sung,
The archer's weapons idly strung !
They ranged themselves for a grand “ battue.”
Wolves they unkennelled, and boars a few,
Rabbits they found by the hundred score,
Weazels and hedgehogs—but nothing more ;
No signs of a robber, no trace of his den,
No relic of him, or his mother, or men,
Till—puzzled—at length, of all caution bereft,
They strayed to the right, they strayed to the left,

Some hied to the south, some went to the north,
Some east, some west—But ALL sallied forth,
Leaving His Holiness “quite alone”
By the side of a queer-looking tabular stone,
Which . . . Lo! and Behold! moved out of its
place,
Disclosing one ill-shaven Brigand-like face,
With a second behind—and a third as well,
And as many besides as we care to tell;
Brought up, at the rear, by an elderly crone—
Economic of flesh, but profuse of bone.

VIII.

What need to explain?—’Twas the Brigand and train
Whom all the Pope’s soldiers were hunting in vain,
Whilst snug in a cave
More deep than a grave
He managed, securely, his bacon to save.
’Twas he—Giovanni—beyond any doubt,
With his band and his mother, who all sallied out,
Their ill-looking faces
All writhed with grimaces
Exhibiting airs, which by no means were graces,
Saluting the Pope
In a way which we hope
Had ne’er been before
Nor will evermore—
For thus, be it told, with an impudence bold
Did the Brigand address him:

IX.

“ You’re bought and sold,
“ So cheer up, my hearty—I trust you’re quite well.
“ ’Tis an age since we met in St. Peter’s cell ;
“ We both were then equal—Behold us now !
“ A triple crown YOU bear on your brow,
“ A jacket of red, with cross-gartered tights,
“ Proclaim ME the Chief of the Forest Knights.
“ *You* trade in sin, to improve taxation,
“ And compound with ex—communication.
“ *My* trade is to cheat, to rob, to lie.
“ Which is the honester ? You or I ?

X.

“ You’ve come to dine with me—nay, never look glum ;
“ I take no denial—so choose not, but come.”
Wherewith, despite his prayers and fright,
They held down his arms, and pinioned them tight.
Then—down in that cave, more dark than a grave,
They bore him in spite of the kicks he gave ;
Then roll’d back the stone as it seem’d before,
And covered the mouth of their cavern o’er
So neatly, that none might the spot discover,
Though roving a twelvemonth the forest over.

XI.

There was sorrow that night on the Vatican’s height
When the Priesthood returned in a pitiful plight,
Having left in the lurch the Head of their Church,
To find with base robbers his pillow or perch.

And what did he, when they made so free ?
Did he faint ? Did he die ?—We shall presently see.

XII.

When down in the cavern and safe from pursuit,
In an atmosphere nearly as black as one's boot,
Each robber bowed low, with a grin on his face,
Then ran to the table, as if for a race,
And sat down to dinner, each man in his place,
First asking " His Holiness " just to say grace ;
Which he, like a dunce, complied with at once,
In the hope that good manners would spread for the nonce,
Which hope, like to others he had known in his day,
Soon dissolved into nothing and melted away,
For although, from the cords which *had* bound him,
released,

And forced to sit down with such wretches to feast,
The language his ears were compelled to drink in
Was such as quite shocked him—to listen was sin.
Yet what could he do ? One helped him to meat
(Although it was Friday), and swore he should eat ;
Another upraised him a goblet of wine,
And vowed he should pledge in a draught so divine,
Then drained to the dregs, and swore by his shame,
That " His Holiness " should straightway just do the
same ;

Whilst the ugly old crone, who did all she was able
To make him the butt of that ill-ordered table,
Rose up from her place, with nothing like grace,
And planted a kiss on his reverend face,

The sound of which echoed that dark cavern o'er,
And set all its vagabond rout in a roar.

XIII.

A blush of terror, mixed with shame,
Suffused his cheeks with crimson flame,
Whilst ribald laughter joy'd to see
The old man's silent agony.
The wine cup circl'd more and more,
The yells grew madder than before ;
They cursed—they raved—they shrieked—they sung
Till every cavern echo rung.
One demon, stronger than the rest,
With giant grasp secured his waist,
And wheel'd him through a Satyr dance,
Till sense gave away, and Nature's trance,
More kind than human pity, came
To crown *his* sorrow, and *their* shame.

XIV.

An hour or more had flitted o'er
Within that cave more dark than a grave ;
The orgie of overwhelming crime
Had ended for a little time.
The demon-band was locked in sleep,
All save its blackest one,
Who had a purpose, dark but deep,
To work alone—alone.
Behold ! the frenzied Pope awakes
From out his trance of pain,
His aged head with torture aches,
His tears are shed in vain.

The Robber Chieftain marks his eye,
He listens to his groan,
But ponders on the strategy
He fain would work—alone !
“ Enough, old man,”—he spoke at length ;
“ Give heed to what I say,
“ Whilst nature yet permits you strength
“ To heed the prayer I pray ;
“ For even I have not forgot
“ That once I lived for Heaven,
“ And fain would now, before I rot,
“ Seek means to be forgiven ;
“ One only path to me remains
“ To reach the starry sky,
“ And thou alone canst break the chains
“ Which bind me here to die.
“ ’Tis thine to will—’tis thine to do—a SAINT I wish
to be ;
“ SO MAKE ME ONE—or, by the Lord, I’LL MAKE A
SAINT OF THEE !”

XV.

Thus spoke and *meant* that wicked man,¹
For though so vile—so base,
He had that faith in mystery’s plan
Which made belief a grace.
He deemed that delegated power yet dwelt with man
below,
And impious still in fortune’s hour, confessed death’s
coming blow.

XVI.

His Holiness, with terror dumb,
More chiefly than surprise,
Bethought him of the world to come,
And how a good man dies.
But soon like lightning's vivid ray,
A thought flashed on his brain,
That *all* deceit were *scarce* deceit
If but one tithe remain
Of truth, to make its falsehood fair,
And cleanse from *damm*ing stain.
He was a Jesuit in truth,
Although he knew it not,
And held *that* not a lie, forsooth,
Which had not *all* its blot.
"Your wish I grant," the Pope replied ;
"And pledge my sacred name,
"Unless yourself shall yet decide
"Your purpose to disclaim.
"Within my Palace, flanked by all that's noble, rich,
and great,
"I vow to keep the oath I've pledged, be it for soon
or late."

XVII.

Enough—the vow thus vowed, was meant
For *keeping*—to the ear—
Yet *breaking*—in its true event,
As time shall render clear.

XVIII.

Three weeks sped o'er—the month was May,
The hour was noontide high,
Imperial Rome was bright and gay
As Heaven's o'er-arching sky.
The Pope was on his ivory throne,
His Cardinals were nigh,
For loved he not to be alone,
Poor guileless man—and why?
Behold a cavalcade appears
In pageant-like array,
Led on by one who boldly rears
A head whose locks are gray.
A hundred followers swell his train
Whose banners flaut the wind,
Whilst twice a hundred serving men
Ride, jocundly, behind.
It is the Brigand, come to claim
The pledge so lately given,
That should bestow eternal fame,
A passport into Heaven.

XIX.

The Pope blushed red—the Pope blushed blue,
He didn't know what in the world to do;
But first looked up, and next looked down,
Then sily smiled, then quelled a frown;
In short, he was bothered, as well might he be,
At seeing so much fine company—

“Your oath—your oath,” the Brigand cried ;
“A Saint I would straightway be ;
“So make me a Saint, with all pomp and pride,
“Or I’ll make a Saint of thee.”

XX.

The Pope blushed red—the Pope blushed blue,
He didn’t know what in the world to do ;
But thinking it safest to keep somewhat back,
Withdrew to his guards with a speed not slack,
Then—plucking up courage, at length thus said :
“ *You can’t be a Saint till after you’re dead ;*
“No man ever heard
“Of a thing so absurd
“As a Saint ALL ALIVE—This, I give you my word
“My oath shall be kept as the sacredest treasure,
“For long in my ear hath it clang’d,
“And I’ll make you a Saint, with the greatest of
pleasure
“If first—YOU’LL CONSENT TO BE HANGED.”

XXI.

The Brigand turned white—the Brigand turned blue,
He didn’t know what in the world to do ;
’Twas clear he was “sold”—in his own trap caught
So he wished the sly Pope “good day”—
Then turned, like a dog with his tail cut short,
And sneaked to his kennel away.

XXII.

Some weeks passed o'er, more calm than before,
Pope Innocent chuckled—the Brigand he swore ;
But oft as it happens in this vale of tears,
That wicked men thrive for a good many years,
Their end is *not* peace ; their profits must cease :
They seldom obtain of their lives a long lease,
As so it turned out on the present occasion,
For whilst Giovanni (who feared no invasion)
Was cosily napping one day in the sun,
His band all reposing at ease,
A Battalion of Archers came gingerly on
And captured them all midst the trees ;
'Tis true some twain of the Archers were slain,
As also the Chief of His Holiness' train ;
For which sorry deed, as a public example,
They hanged Giovanni on high,
Giving just as much rope as was fitting and ample
To make a great rascal die.

XXIII.

Thus ended the story of that villain's glory.
This only remains to tell,
They buried him then, with the rest of the slain,
In the forest, just as they fell.
Long years passed o'er, some sixty or more,
Pope Innocent long had been dead ;
One " Urban " by name, the fifth of that same,
Ruled Rome and its Robbers instead.

The bold Giovanni had long been forgotten :
His bones, like his exploits, were both of them rotten,
But not so the name of the Archer Chief

Who fell in so wretched a way,
For his children's children mourned in grief

His loss on that fatal day.

They honoured his name—they were proud of his fame,
And vowed that posterity should do the same ;
So, by hook and by crook, and by making a bother,
They managed to get, in some queer way or other,
A promise, from Urban, of canonization
For him, their long buried illustrious relation,
Though how much it cost them for such an ovation
Is no where mentioned in this our narration.

Suffice it to tell, they managed so well,

That one day, by the sound of St. Peter's Bell,
A noble procession, a mile or two long,
Sallied forth from the Aventine Gate,
With taper, and incense, and triumphant song,
And very remarkable state.

They went to the forest, they dug up *some* bones,
'Midst flourish of trumpets, and shoutings, and groans.
They carried them back in vast pomp to Rome,
Where they laid them beneath a crystal dome,
And a Mass was said o'er the senseless dead,

Which proclaimed, till the skies were riven,
That a Saint was then translated from men
To the Holy Host of Heaven !

XXIV.

From that same hour, what mighty power,
Gave those poor bones their careful dower,

What tongue shall state : the miracles great
Old legends (monkish ones) relate ;
Till one foul day, when a man went to pay
His respects to the dead in an un-common way,
By scanning these bones, so conveniently bare,
And taking short " notes " of what he found there,
The which, with a manuscript old, to compare,
He found—past all doubting, or shadow or shade—
That the body of him whom a Saint they had made
Was that of the BRIGAND, instead of the CHIEF,
Whose sons made his Saintship a source of relief.
'Twas known—for an incontrovertible truth—
That the Noble had lost three fingers in youth,
And couldn't well manage, as Nature yet stands,
To be buried with eight (and two thumbs) on his hands ;
The fact was too true—but as none ever knew
Of a means to uncanonize—what could they do ?

But a Saint let him rest, as indeed it was best,
For a blunder so awkward, must needs be confess'd,
Not the right sort of thing for rude laymen to fling
At the triple-crown'd head of a Spiritual King ;
And so it was thought—for the " savant " who brought
A scandal so sad on the Papal Court
Was found, next day, on the broad highway
A bleeding mass of senseless clay,
With none to pity—and none to pray
His canonization, in any way.

NO. II.—THE HERMIT.

A LEGEND OF ST. VITUS.

IN Hampshire County, famed alike—if fame is not mistaken—

For Tory members, pretty girls, and over-fatted bacon,
There ranged a noted forest once, yclept “the New,”
wherein

King Rufus met an ugly death to crown his life of sin.

A few scant relics, scattered wide, alone may yet be seen
To mark where roved the monarch-stag throughout that
wide demesne.

That forest—scarce a forest now—

Its trees have made their final *bough*,

Its ancient “tenants of the soil”

Departed from a land of toil,

Its grandsire oaks departed—gone—

Leaving behind their *trunks* alone,

Its elder sons of elm and beach

Nigh swept away from mortal reach,

Their younger *branches* too—we grieve

Have well nigh taken final *leave*,

Save only in one favoured spot

By woodman’s axe dismembered not,

Where yet a grove of ancient trees
Sing vespers to the evening breeze.
In that same forest—years ago,
Six hundred—probably—or so,

There dwelt a solitary man—beside a bushy dell,
Who scooped from out a sandy rock his solitary cell.
No monk was he—nor learned clerk deep wrapp'd in
meditation—
Nor yet a layman—of the kind in general acceptance ;
But still—withal a reverend man if outward sign might
shew,
Or length of gown—or length of beard—or length of
face, or so.
Men dubbed him “Hermit,” ’mongst themselves, and
held him gifted well,
With power to read the stars aright within that lonely cell.
They deemed him rich in mystic lore—those guileless
forest men,
And brought him gifts of many a kind to cheer him now
and then.

They brought him fruits, and wine—and fish
(He took them all to meet their wish)
They culled him “simples”—not a few,
(He deemed the givers *simple* too)
They brought him water—from a spring,
(Be sure he ne’er abused it)
They brought him soap—fit for a king,
(Alas !—he never used it)

They brought him—Hold ! no matter what, to cheer his
lonely cell,
He took in all—and then *took in* the givers too—as well.
For—'neath a specious fair outside of holiness and
worth,
He was a sorry hypocrite as ever crawled this earth,
He *aped* the Anchorite—alone before men's wondering
faces,
To pull — behind their virtuous backs — unlimited
grimaces ;
In short he was—a humbug—Well ! are all who virtuous
seem,
As virtuous, or as holy, or as righteous as men deem?—
Some are—of course. Our Kings ! our Queens ! our
Bishops ! and our Clergy !
Our great philanthropists as well—who hold by the
lit-urgy !
Rich men must *all* alike be good ! 'Tis poverty—and
tatters
Alone, that make the difference in sublunary matters !
Perhaps—if truth were told of all, respecting *no* condition,
Mankind would all be rogues alike with one slight sub-
division—
The rogues whom happiness and wealth have placed
above temptation
And those whom grief and poverty have roused to
desperation !

Be this as't may, our anchorite
Was certainly an hypocrite,

Who—whatsoever might betide—beyond all doubt and question

Would never let *another's* wants affect his *own* digestion.

He rather looked on tears and sighs

(The tears of *other people's eyes*)

As giving—almost—if not quite

A kind of zest to appetite.

Or—like some Christians, snug and warm

Within the fire-side's bound,

Who listen to the outward storm

And rather liked the sound!

He rather liked the sight of grief—it *tickled* him! In fine

He loved it—as some epicures love olives with their wine!

Who was he—or whence came he—it is not for us to say,

Enough—it serves our purpose thus his portrait to display.

Behold him in the rock hewn cell

Adown the fair and bushy dell,

In which it was his choice to dwell,

And—truly one may safely tell

'Twas furnished comfortably well

Beyond all Hermit parallel.

With table hewed from log of wood

And moss grown stool—extremely good,

A home-spun couch—or wicker bed

With rushes comfortably spread,

A nook—or two—or three—or four,

With such a humbly fashioned door,

Well calculated to conceal
What prying eyes might else reveal,
A kind of hearth whereon a fire
Might kindle to his heart's desire,
With pots and pans of fire-baked clay,
All neatly stowed on shelves away,
In short—our Anchorite's menage
Was quite complete—if not too large ;
One only want seemed unsupplied
To crown his happy life,
Alas ! That this should be denied
A tom cat, or a wife !

Loud roared the storm one wintry eve, while snug within
his cell
Our Hermit hugged himself, right pleased at being housed
so well ;
Down poured the rain, it cheered him much. “ Ha !
Ha ! ” he cried with glee,
“ How merrily the angels weep—so weep they not for me.”
He heard the thunder—loud and long ; “ Ha ! Ha ! ” he
cried again,
“ How loudly doth the cherubs laugh above Earth's wide
domain.”
He saw the lightning's angry flash, “ How kind of
Heaven,” he said,
“ To light my chamber up so well, and cheer me in my bed.”
Then loosened he his girdle cord—to ease him for the
night,
For was he not a lucky man, that seeming Anchorite !

Loud howled the storm ! But hark ! A sound—a cry
of grief, or pain !

“ Ha ! Ha ! ” he chuckled—some poor wretch is pattering in the rain.”

That cry once more ! It nearer came—then nearer,—
nearer still,

“ Some wandering fool,” he calmly said, “ is haply taken ill.”

Once more that cry ! And—at the door, a traveller’s
form appears

A venerable Pilgrim—bowed by weight of seventy years.

“ I cry you mercy, honest man,” that ancient father said,

“ Begrudge me not a cup of milk—a crust of oaten bread,

“ My feet have travelled wearily—my heart is sad with
care—

“ I pant for rest this stormy night. Oh ! grant an old
man’s prayer.”

“ Go rest,” our Hermit coldly spoke, “ *outside* my chamber door,

“ I have no bread to fling away, so niggard is my store ;

“ But—if some radishes will serve—behold ! I give
. . . no more.”

“ I thank you, Hermit,” gently spoke the venerable man,

“ A little salt—to relish them—give further if you can.”

“ What ? Salt, upon a fasting day ? I really feel ashamed !

“ Perdition catch you for a rogue,” our Hermit well nigh
screamed.

“ My life of penance yields not ought of luxury, or ease,

“ So—eat your saltless radishes—and vanish—when you
please.”

“Methinks thou hast a churlish air,”
The ancient Pilgrim cried,
“Thy words are bitter—as thy fare—
“Hast thou not ought beside?
“A gentle speech—a crust of bread,
“A cup of milk, I ween,
“To one like me with hoary head,
“Had fitter welcome been.”

“I have no food save that I gave,” the lying Hermit told,
“Alas! that poverty, like mine, should such a truth
unfold,
“Besides . . . I am a cripple! See—my limbs
are stiff with pain,
“I may not raise me from my stool without a fearful
strain.”

“Ah ho! Is’t so!” the Pilgrim spoke,
“I have a cure for such,
“Behold—my finger! See! How now.

“I raise it up—this much. And straight the cripple
throws aside—his pallet—or his crutch.”
This said, the Pilgrim *raised his hand*, our Hermit straight-
way rose,
And “malgre lui” began to dance upon his nimble
toes.
He threw his legs about so fast—no prancing, dancing-
master
That ever came from France or Spain could cut his
capers faster;

He threw his arms, too, up and down, now pointing to
the sky,
Now whirling like a windmill's sail with tempest raging
high ;
Nor yet alone in active play his limbs flew out
apace,
A kind of twitching seemed to wring each feature of his
face,
His mouth slipp'd upward towards his eye, his eyes both
looked askance,
Then—nearer to each other drew—like partners in a
dance ;
Anon—his head would touch the roof—receiving quite a
shock
By coming into contact with a piece of jagged rock,
Then next—his feet would step aside—in double triple
time,
Just like our friend Grimaldi in a comic pantomime.
In short—he played such antics that our Pilgrim could
but smile,
Though sorely taxed to be demure—and famishing the
while.
“ Gramercy ! Pilgrim—stay thy hand,” our trembling
Hermit cried,
“ These torments rend me—O forbear.”
“ I will,” the Pilgrim sighed.
“ But—hither bring a little salt—these radishes, though
good,
“ Are somewhat of a meagre dish for one in lack of
food ;

“Methinks a capon—nicely browned, and stuffed with
truffles rare,

“Would stay a traveller’s appetite much better than such
fare.”

Right nimbly rushed our Anchorite, and from his private
store,

Brought forth a capon, large and fat, and richly larded
o’er,

The which he placed, with trembling hand, his Pilgrim
guest before.

“Thanks, gentle Hermit, very much, and now bethink
thee, too,

“A cup of wine would much enhance this very pleasing
view.”

So spake the Pilgrim, with a smile upon his wrinkled face
That made it almost young the while, it was so full of
grace.

“No wine have I,” the Hermit cried, “amidst these
forest trees ;

“We boast no luxury—like wine . . . some water—if
you please.”

“Amen !” the Pilgrim spoke again—AND UPWARD
RAISED HIS HAND,

“Meanwhile, you’ll please TO DANCE AGAIN at my
express command.

A little exercise or so
Upon the ‘light fantastic’ toe,
Will sharpen up your native wit
And open up your heart a bit.”

Whereon, our Hermit, as before, impelled against his will,
 Cut capers of the strangest sort with superhuman skill,
 He danced a minuet, a waltz, then figured a quadrille,
 A polka next—*upon his head*—with vigour nigh to kill,
 Then—lighting on his legs again, with arms a-kimbo
 placed,

He did the double shuffle in a way that not disgraced.
 An Irish jig—a Scotch reel—each followed in succession,
 To all of which he featly gave the national expression,
 Concluding with a breakdown that so realised its name
 It fairly *broke him down*—exhausted, crippled, lame !

The Pilgrim stayed his hand once more—then spoke—

“Lest further ill

“Betide thee, bring a cup of wine,” our Hermit cried,
 “I will,”

AND SO HE DID. But mark this fact . . .

. . . *within the cup he threw*

*A subtle poison, which his art had taught him how to brew,
 From fifty patent medicines—Specifics, every one,*

’Gainst every kind of earthly ill beneath the Heavenly sun,
 ’Gainst rheumatism,—colic—gout—worms—wooden legs
 and cramp,

*(One shilling and three halfpence each—inclusive of the
 stamp !)*

This horrid mixture tendered he his Pilgrim guest unto,
 Like one Lucretia Borgia whom the opera brings to view,
 But—unlike those—*her* silly guests—he was not quite
 so flat,

But like Prince Hamlet—in the play—he smelt “a rat,
 a rat.”

First holding to his nose the cup—then dashing it
away,

He frowned upon our Hermit—and thus solemnly
did say :

“Base Hermit—murderer that would be—thou hast
deserved thy fate,

“In me behold thy mortal judge—Heav’n’s earthly
delegate.

“’Tis mine to speak thy dreadful doom, from which thou
canst not fly,

“And your’s—perfidious Anchorite—TO DANCE UNTIL
YOU DIE.

“But surely till that dance shall end—in death to re-
unite us,

“Thou must—and shalt remember me—thy Pilgrim-
guest, SAINT VITUS.”

Thus said—the saintly Pilgrim rose, with proud but
sorrowing mien,

And vouched he would never more on earth be by
mortal seen.

* * * * *

A week o’erpast—some forest men who knew the Her-
mit well,

Beheld him dancing on the green before his empty
cell,

He heeded not their kindly words—their looks of blank
amaze,

But danced until—in horrid flight—they took their
several ways.

* * * * *

A second week—they came again—in dreadful doleful
dumps,

But found him minus half his legs—while dancing ON
THE STUMPS.

* * * * *

Another week—they ventured still—with wondering eyes
and lips,

But found him—with no legs at all—yet dancing ON
HIS HIPS.

* * * * *

A fourth week past—a whole host came to find his
body gone,

Yet dancing ON HIS WHISKERS, with but half a head alone.

A fifth week came—*no* relic met *their* looks who came
to see,

Save one small patch of greasy earth—as small as small
could be,

And two small tufts of grisly hair—which even while
they spied

The busy winds took swiftly up and scattering far and
wide,

Embedded in the earth at last—by Ichen river's ride,

Where still their offshoots grow apace in funeral rows
along,

Their voices whispering in the breeze a melancholy song,
Of how ST. VITUS came on earth to curse, as with a spell,

All them that love the giddy dance, “not *wisely*—but—
TOO WELL?”

NO. III.—THE TWIN BROTHERS.

A LEGEND OF TINTERN ABBEY.

The Monks of old—the Monks of old ! They were a
“canny” race,
Discreet as bold—discreet as bold—full of holy grace !

They chose their homes where the keen east wind
Could never a coign of vantage find,
Where the sweet south breeze o’er a clump of trees
Whispered of peace and worldly ease,
And a rising slope conceal’d well nigh
From hungry greed and sinful eye ;

Oh ! those Monks of old were a gleesome race. They
neither toiled nor spun,
But lounged through life at an easy pace, from morn to
setting sun !

They feasted on the lordly haunch, relieved by
toothsome game,
They fasted on the speckled trout whenever a
Friday came.
They paid no rent, no rate, no tax for tower or
cloistered cell,
And they slept the sleep of a slumbering deep, from
eve to Matin bell.

Oh ! those Monks of old, those Monks of old ; we never
again shall see
So many good men (save now and then) agreeing——to
agree !

Adown fair Monmouth's flowery vale, where threads the
silvery Wye,
And Raglan's tower, in feudal pride, yet meets the
traveller's eye,
Where trickling streamlets gaily dance beneath the sun-
light's glow,
And rugged rocks and mossy glades alternate beauties
show ;
There rises yet one cloistered fane, a relic of the past,
Which centuries have looked upon, nor looked, as yet,
their last,
Thine Abbey—*Tintern*—famed alike in Minstrel-song
and prayer,
A "thing of beauty" which decay can never make less fair.
Which time but silvers with his touch, to leave a costly
stain,
More reverent in the eyes of love than youth's primeval
grain ;
Yes ! thou art fair ! thy cloistered aisles, thy pointed
arches tall,
Thy windows rich in tracery, thine ivy-mantled wall ;
Thy grass-grown site where daisies dwell, and yellow
oxlips bloom,
All mark thee with a life which lives beyond life's com-
mon doom.

And yet, had walls but tongues as well, as fable gives
 them ears,
Methinks *thine* might a tale unfold of mingled hopes and
 fears,
Of blighted lives, ambition foiled, of vengeance gone
 astray ;
Of late repentance hovering o'er life's swiftly fleeting
 day,
More rather than of holy choice, from holy dictate
 made
The haven of poor shipwrecked souls whose part in life
 is played,
Strange tales are told of gown and cowl, of whip and
 knotted cord,
Of passions chained in rocky cell, of horrors most ab-
 horred ;
Of torments cunningly contrived, of death by tortures
 slow,
Unwritten now in mercy's code for modern ears to know—
All this *they* did, those Monks of old ! so full of holy
 grace !
Yet ever showed a smiling eye, a calm and placid face,
Whate'er their grief, whate'er their sin, the world should
 never guess,
'Twas shrouded, coffin'd, all within, and buried——'neath
 their dress.

In bluff King Harry's boisterous time, when MERCY tried,
 in vain—
To hold up an *umbrella* in that very *stormy reign*,

Then ministers and wives, alike, had patience sorely
taxed,

And only ceased complaining, too, when unpolitely
“AXED.”

One Prior ANSELM ruled the roast in Tintern’s holy
fane,

A man whose purity of life had never known a stain,
(Whose christen’d name was *something else*, which little
matters now,

But changed to “ANSELM” when he took his first
monastic vow)

A man, whose chiefest pride it was in holding strictest
rule

O’er those he governed, for the time, head-master of his
school ;

Whose only weakness, curbed in vain, was that of many
a sinner,

A weakness, “tell it not in Gath,” a weakness ? for his
dinner !

He loved good beef, and mutton too, nor turned up
priestly nose

At ham, well cured, or boiled pigs-head, or even
pettitoes.

He worship’d ducks, and geese, and fowls, in his
peculiar way,

A worship, born of carnal hopes, not clerical, but lay ;

Of portly presence, too, was he—befitting times and
place,

A model Monk, if such may be, as full of flesh as
grace !

The fasting days of Lenten time had ended, and the
morn

Of Easter, with its feast of flesh, had come, at last, to
dawn.

Good Prior Anselm's black-robed host, with longing
looks on all,

Were ranged, in order of their rank, within the chapel
hall ;

But ere those hungry Monks could feed on carnal food—
Alas !

'Twas necessary every one should kneel at early Mass,
Meanwhile, in their refectory, a staff of willing cooks
Were roasting meat, or trussing game, with joy in all
their looks ;

One merry father plucked a goose, a second made a pie,
A third one spitted larks, *and swallowed two*, upon the
sly !

A fourth sat basting the sirloin, and like a wicked man,
While no one watched him *slipp'd a sop within the drip-
ping pan !*

A fifth—a sixth—a seventh as well, each labor'd at his
post,

Beneath a " Chef de Cuisine," who, as ruler of *that* roast
Was, also, the Sub-Prior, and had prayed a dispensation
(For self and staff) from tending Mass, by virtue of his
station.

With gown tucked up, and cords relaxed, a joyous crew
were they

Who cooked that sumptuous dinner on that happy Easter
day !

Within the sacred precincts of the Abbey's Altar-shrine,
A different scene was acted, with a fervour nigh divine,
There, rung the supplicating tones of three-score Monks
and ten,

Whose "Kyrie-Elieson" had no falsehood in it then ;
Whose "Gloria in Excelsis" sent a joyous shout on
high,

Whose "Credo," springing from the heart, climbed up into
the sky.

Whose "Sanctus" had a holy ring, like metal good and
true,

(Be sure no counterfeit will pass where Heaven's own
coin is due)

Whose "Agnus-Dei" softly sung, in triads pure and
sweet,

Was music such as Heaven might claim, when Angels,
weeping, meet ;

Whose "Dona-Nobis" came at last, a thankful pause to
claim,

With *peace*, for its attendant, in the SAVIOUR's holy name.

Then * * * *

Harum-scarum, how they run ! helter-skelter, every
one !

Portly Monk and lean lay-brother, tumbling over one
another !

In their haste like graceless sinners, eager only for their
dinners !

Violating etiquette, shamefully, 'tis true,

But then, what would not any set of hungry "fellahs"
do ?

We've seen, at suppers, routs, and balls, in fashionable squares,

Dukes, Marquises, and Barons shew exactly such like airs.

Why then should poor long-fasting Monks not follow such like ways

When pressed by hunger, hard and fast, for forty mortal days ?

They passed *all* out, that rabble rout, from Chapel to their dinner,

Save Prior Anselm, and *one* more, a better mannered sinner.

“ Why pass *you* not,” good Anselm cried, “ to dinner, with the rest ? ”

“ Because *one* waits,” the man replied, “ without—to be confest,

“ He bears a purse well lined with gold, refreshing to the view,

“ And vows he will be shrived by none, save Priest of rank—like you.”

“ Admit him straight,” the Prior spoke, “ ’tis meet we shrive *that* sinner,

“ Although extremely hard to be delayed from such a dinner ;

“ Our fees, for shrift, have been of late but scanty in their dole ;

“ And though our charge for such has been quite moderate—on the whole,

- “ Good customers are very scarce, confound these Welsh,
I say !
“ They don’t commit half sins enough to make our business pay !
“ This man has gold. Admit him quick. We love a golden sinner ;
“ Perhaps, when he has made his shrift, he’ll pick a bone at dinner !
“ And, if within his soul there dwells the godly grace which ought,
“ He will not make confession long—but duly—cut it short !”

Of stalwart form and soldier build was he who came to kneel,
In penitential mood, his peccant troubles to reveal ;
His brow was dark, his eye was fierce, his hair of matted grey,
Hung all unkempt upon his back, in sad neglected way ;
His hauberk, travel stained and worn, his sword nigh five feet long,
Shew’d signs of many a battle, waged in aid of right (or wrong)
His boots were foreign, reaching high, with spurs of crimson stain,
Betokening rider’s eager haste, or courser’s mighty strain ;
His bearing was not that of “ Knight,” with honour for his boon,
But rather of the “ cut throat,” with a dash of “ Piccaroon,”

Upon the whole he looked a man, whom fate had cut
adrift ;

And very like, indeed, to one who stood in lack of shrift.

“Gramercy, Holy Father,” spoke that babe of doubtful
grace,

“I need your special offices in lamentable case,

“’Tis nigh on thirty years ago since last my beads
were told,

“So, shrive me, with befitting ease, for this full purse of
gold.”

Good Prior Anselm crossed himself, but nathless gave
reply,

“Your sins of thirty years, methinks, must in huge com-
pass lie,

“Compress them, as thou mayest, within some reasonable
space,

“And I will act accordingly, returning grace for grace.”

“My tale is long,” his suppliant cried, “I may not cut it
short,

“’Tis one of fearful magnitude, and horrible import ;

“Of murder, theft, of sacrilege, of pillage, of rapine,

“Of perjury and burglary, and treason too, I ween,

“Of scaling convent walls, and thence abducting virgin
nuns ;

“Of robbing negro parents of their daughters and their
sons,

“Of cutting midnight throats, in haste, to steal men’s
cash away,

“Of finding Yeomen’s cattle, which had never gone astray,

- “Of gambling, dicing, and what not, with villanous intention,
“Besides some thousand other crimes, too numerous for mention.
“I have them catalogued all here, writ out by learned clerk,
“On vellum, twenty-two yards long, attested by MY MARK !
“Wilt please you scan the trifling list, and when the task be done,
“Give absolution for the same, and pardon every one !”
“Hold back your hand,” the Prior spoke. “I may not touch yon scroll,
“Whatever be the magnitude of sins upon your soul ;
“Your tongue must speak, and bended knee attest, with humbled mien,
“Ere I, a priest, shall dare to stand your God and you between.
“In yon confessional bend down, mine ear shall then take in,
“And whatsoe’er the magnitude, relieve thee of thy sin.”

For three distressful hours, or more, those two held converse low,
That Priest and penitent, alone, both screen’d from outward show,
Yet what *one* spoke, and what *one* heard, no mortal’s pen may write,
Confession’s seal o’er all is set, black, black, as black midnight !

But when, at length, good Anselm came once more to
light of day,

His hair, which erst had chestnut been, *was turned to
ashen gray !*

Nay more, his speech had well nigh fled, his eyes with
tears were dim,

He trembled like a palsied man, in every quivering limb.
Such horror chained his tongue : alack ! its functions had
to this-come,

He could not yield *that* penitent the usual "pax-
vobiscum,"

But shaped itself in silent prayer that Heaven, in mercy
good,

Might send no more such penitent, *to freeze his very
blood !*

The bag of gold, his hungry clutch so late had closed
upon,

He took from out his leathern pouch, and dashed against
the stone.

Then turned his back, and would have passed in doleful
mood away,

But that his penitent cried out, in piteous accents
"Stay !

"One other sin I would confess that weighs upon my soul

"More heavily than any yet—aye, heavier than the
whole.

"'Tis this, and while the words come forth, my grief I
scarce can smother,

"For surely, as I live and breathe, I SLEW MY ONLY
BROTHER."

- “ Oh ! horrible ! most horrible ! ” the startled Prior cried.
- “ Oh ! wretched man ! a second Cain ? Oh ! cruel fratricide : ”
- “ E’en as thou wilt,” that sinner spoke, “ ’twas thus it came about,
- “ And of not quite an accident, befriend me such a doubt.
- “ As twins, of one dear mother born, myself and brother grew,
- “ Like apples, blossoming on one stalk, most beautiful to view,
- “ We loved, as only twins could love, till discord came between,
- “ And cut us from the parent stem, while yet our love was green.
- “ It was a pink-faced Miller’s maid, whose eyes of liquid blue
- “ Looked kindlier on my brother than I thought that brother’s due ;
- “ We quarrelled, he and I, one day, for that fair maiden’s sake,
- “ And fought between yon river’s side and yonder hazel brake.
- “ We wrestled, fell, then rose again, till by one luckless blow,
- “ With nigh a giant’s mighty strength, I laid that brother low ;
- “ A breathless clod of human clay, no woman’s idol then,
- “ And I, the dealer of that death, the wretchedest of men !

- “ With madness seized, I bent me down, and looked
upon his face
“ To note my mother’s features there, in all their loving
grace ;
“ I dared not meet that mother’s eye—so, pondering
as I stood,
“ Took up my brother’s senseless form, and cast it in the
flood ;
“ I saw the river close it o’er, then hastened far
away,
“ An outcast, and a murderer, till this unhappy day :
“ The Devil tempted me to sin, he hounds me on e’en
now,
“ Else would I turn me from the scent, and take the
holy vow ! ”
Uprose the Prior’s stately form, two inches more in
height,
His eye lit up with something strange to its accustomed
light ;
His cheek—all blanched, till now—o’ercome with flush
of rosy red,
As thus, to his dire penitent, in solemn tones he said :
“ Take heart of grace for *that* one sin. I would to
Heaven the rest
“ Might be atoned as readily, or bear thy conscience
test ;
“ *Your brother did not die !* BUT LIVES ! yon river’s cool-
ing wave
“ Closed o’er him for one instant—but, his charmed life
to save,

“ He rose, he battled with the flood, its mastery to gain,
“ And reached the shore to seek—alas ! his brother, but
in vain.
“ Lift up your eyes, and if so be, the name you bear is
‘ MINGO,’
“ In me—not dead, as you suppose—BEHOLD THE
LIVING ‘ JINGO ! ’ ”

What pen shall write, what power shall tell the joyful
recognition

Between those two long sundered hearts, of strangely wide
condition !

The one all spotless in his fame, the other black as night,
Yet brethren, through one kindred tie, in blackest crime’s
despite.

They gazed into each other’s eyes, they clasped each
other’s hand,

With feelings neither of the twain could rightly under-
stand,

They yearned towards each other, in a manner quite
correct

(The same as done upon the stage, with excellent effect);
But also yearned for something else, their mutual wants
to meet,

That something being, need we tell ?—a something good
to eat !

They longed, in short, for dinner ! So, with steps of
eager haste

They bent them towards the dining hall, no further time
to waste,

But found—Oh, horror ! NOTHING left, of all that festive store ;

The haunch, the sirloin, and the game—were each and all—NO MORE !

Those hungry Monks had eaten *all*—the roast, the boiled, the fried—

The fish, the flesh, the soup, the bread, with everything beside.

The very platters had been licked, the dishes too, I wot,
One only thing remaining ——— 'twas ——— some
mustard in a pot !

The gluttons had forgot their chief, in hunger's mighty strain,

And gorged themselves so extra full : they could no more retain.

Then, sought their pallets, just like hogs, to grunt the time away,

Or dream, perchance, of feasts to come, another Easter day !

The Prior groaned, the Prior sighed, he really very nearly cried,

But to the larder quickly hied, where NOTHING he again espied ;

Save one poor plate of toasted cheese, some four or five days old,

And one poor slice of oaten cake, all blue with damp and mould.

On which *the pair*, full sorely pressed, were fain at last to dine,

Assisted by one half-pint jug of ADAM's famous wine !

Yet still, when rising from that meal, good Anselm
meekly said

“We thank thee, ever blessed Lord, for this, our daily
bread.”

Next day a sorrowing cry arose within that Abbey’s
wall—

For PENANCE fell right heavily, at retribution’s call ;
Those Monks had nought to eat or drink, save bread and
water—all,

No beef, no mutton, pork nor veal, for one long linger-
ing week,

Till fasting brought them all so low, they scarce could
move or speak ;

“Peccavi” was their ceaseless cry, to Heaven’s o’erarch-
ing throne,

“Peccavi ! oh, Peccavi,” rose in one continuous
groan ;

But when, at last, *fât*-Sunday came, and feasting own’d
their care,

Be sure they let their Prior and his brother take their
share !

Thus ends our tale, save what is left, one sole remaining
joint—

(All tails, e’en of Kilkenny cats, have one small final
point)

Six weeks passed o’er, the brothers twain in gentle con-
verse met,

The godly and the godless one, each willing to forget.

The Prior, hoping to prevail, and win his brother's soul,
To thoughts of holiness beyond this wicked world's control ;

He led him on, by loving words, his stubborn heart to bow,

And promise in due course of time to take the sacred vow.

But, mark the force of early crime, *too* strong to set aside,
Which surges on—resistless—like the ocean's swelling tide ;

On that same day, which should have seen him join God's holy state,

*He bolted from his brother—*WITH THE WHOLE COMMUNION
PLATE !

What next that wretched thief befel we never heard nor cared,

And truly it don't matter how the wily villain fared—

But, of good Anselm, 'tis but just his virtues we record,
By stating that when passed from earth to Heaven for his reward,

The Pope and all his Cardinals in solemn conclave met,
To canonise so good a man, lest ages should forget.

And did the thing genteelly too, with all befitting grace,
By name "ANSELMO," as we find in many a votive place ;
But while they proudly dubb'd him *so*, in Rome's high sounding lingo,

We English people know right well his proper name is
"JINGO !"

No. IV.—TENPENNY NAILS.

A LEGEND OF ST. ANTHONY.

St. Anthony was a respectable man
And a capital saint, deny it who can?
His many temptations and deep lucubrations
Are matters well known to all civilised nations;
And, in spite of some startling, though small,
variations,
Which sometimes creep into the gravest narrations,
Especially such as are written in Latin,
On parchment by no means as smooth as white satin,
Then afterwards *done* into English by one
Who thinks it exceedingly orthodox fun
T' enlarge on a story so ably begun,
Are, doubtless, as true, though enveloped in mystery,
As ninety-nine other facts mentioned in history.
It is not, however, our present intention
To rake up *old* stories, and this fact we mention
Because—though veracious as those before stated—
This tale has by no means been often related,
For reasons—no matter—'tis just now the same,
Be they cogent or not. Let us on to our theme.

St. Anthony was a respectable man,
And a virtuous saint, deny it who can?

He lived in a grotto ; he dined off roots ;
He wore no trousers ; he wore no boots,
Nor yet paper collars, nor even a shirt
(Save one made of horsehair on purpose to hurt).
But in place of all such, to his heels there hung
down

An exceedingly ill-fashioned morning gown,
With a hood at its back and a cord round the waist,
Which, to say at the least, was in shocking bad taste,
Insomuch as its kind was the same we now use
When the law bids its victims go die—in their shoes.

St. Anthony's cell was a dreary place ;
A rock was its roof, a rock was its base,
A stone was his table, a stone was his chair,
Not covered with moss, but chilly and bare.
A skull, a book, and a cross of stone
Were all the "goods" he might call his own,
Save an old conch-shell which the sea gave up
When he prayed, on its shore, for a drinking-cup.
St. Anthony dwelt in this lonely cell
From the dawn of day till the vesper bell,
From the twilight hour till the midnight chime ;
What was to him the flight of time ?
He knelt, till his knees were as rigid grown
As the flinty rock they were bended on,
Till their marrow was cold as the frozen main,
Yet swerved he not from his place of pain,
But prayed, in lowly and suppliant strain,
That Satan might tempt him ONCE MORE in vain !

St. Anthony kneels on his hard rock still,
 His knees, as before, are cold,
 His eyes are flushed, but his lips are chill,
 His beads he has well nigh told.

But stay !

. . . What form of love and light
 Is beside that prayerful anchorite ?

Is she a child of mortal birth
 By sin and sorrow driven ?
 Or comes she to this woe-worn earth
 A minister of Heaven ?
 'Tis PHROACE—the Christian wife
 Of Pagan OSMADDEL—
 Her tale is one of domestic strife ;
 Her petition, a true-love spell !

“Avaunt thee, Sathanus !” Anthony cried,
 “Ora pro me,” his prayer ;
 Whilst the lady—she sat at his dexter side
 Like a statue—fixed as fair.
 “O mihi beati Martini,” * spoke
 The Saint, in his doleful mood ;
 While the lady, who thought he was merely in joke,
 By his side still idly sued.

* It is much to be regretted that this beautiful expression—a prayer to the blessed St. Martin—should have been corrupted into the vulgar phrase, “O my eye and Betty Martin,” but such is the fact. “O tempora ! O mores !”

“O mea culpa, salvum fac,”

Quoth he of the serge dyed brown.

And cord to match—then flat on his back

To the earth, in a swoon, fell down,

Presenting a picture, by no means uncommor,

Of virtue made weak through the presence of woman ;

And furthermore—one which might serve to display

How strength might, through weakness, recover its sway,

For she who knelt by him—the wife in distress—

Did that which she ought (when did woman do less?)

For she bathed both his temples with “Eau-de-Cologne,”

Or some such reviver, if *that* was unknown.

Perhaps she took brandy

As being more handy,

(We haven't much time now such trifles to bandy)

Whatever the means, poor St. Anthony soon

Rose up from the earth, and awoke from his swoon,

So rapidly getting both hearty and well

That Dame PHROACE urged him to give her a spell,

Thus glibly proceeding her story to tell.

“The lord of my soul,” quoth the lady fair,

“Has forsaken his lawful bed

“For the arms of a chit with carroty hair”

(It was auburn, *inclining* to red).

“He hath left me long, he hath left me sad,

“Now, this conduct I think so exceedingly bad,

“That, father, to you I have come for a true-

“Love-spell, which shall teach him such conduct to
rue

“ Till the end of his days, excepting he pays
“ Better heed to my comfort, and mends his bad
ways.”

Now St. Anthony was a respectable man,
And a very *shrewd* saint, deny it who can ?
But he could not well make up his mind that the dame
Who thus spoke was of flesh and of blood, just the same
As himself, but a devil, for some purpose evil
Come up from that place which to name is not civil,
On purpose to try if his powers of evasion
Were strong as they proved on a former occasion.

He looked on her face
Of matronly grace ;
He saw that her gown
Flowed modestly down,
That her eyes were in tears,
That she trembled with fears.

Yet, like bachelors all, as is shockingly common,
He put little faith in the tears of a woman,
And, therefore, determined to test, as he deemed,
If her *feelings* were truly as deep as they seemed,
So smiling quite blandly, and looking jocose,
He first placed his thumb by the side of his nose,
Then said, in a manner delightful to see,
“ I’ve got such a spell as will suit to a T,
“ Please step in my chamber, and lie on my bed ”—
Here the lady blushed deeply, the brightest of red—

“ I don’t mean,” he then stammered, “ with me to lie down,
“ But alone by yourself, nay, nay, never frown,
“ Behold ” . . . Here he opened a door in his cell,
Disclosing, O horror, what grieves us to tell,
For the *thing* he call’d “ BED ” was what *she* call’d a harrow,
Some six feet in length, and exceedingly narrow,
With spikes all along it, and spikes all across,
And spikes down the middle, to make matters worse;
In short, ’twas a framework of rusty iron rails,
Most horridly garnished with TENPENNY NAILS,
Their points all turned upwards . . .
. . . He showed her this bed.
“ You’ll find it uneasy at first, ma’am,” he said,
“ *But heed not the pain, every torture you prove*
“ *Shall be tenfold to him that has slighted your love,*
“ Every groan which *you* utter shall come from *his* heart,
“ Be your pangs then your *comfort*, while *his* be the *smart*.”

She looked at the saint, she looked at his bed,
“ Excuse me,” she cried, with a toss of her head,
 “ I’d much rather lie
 “ On bare boards till I die,
 “ A husbandless wife
 “ To the end of my life,
“ And prove all the horrors of jealousy’s strife,

“Than touch, for one moment, yon horrible rack,
“On which, but to think, gives a pain in one’s back.

“So I wish you good day,”

She proceeded to say,

As she turned her away,

When the Saint thundered “Nay,”

As with giant-like strength he bore her away

To where the bed stood

On two trestles of wood,

Then—her struggles despite,

With invincible might,

Laid her flat on the spikes, *and squeezed her down tight !*

“Ha ! Ha !” quoth he when the deed was done,

“Have I nail’d you, Old Satan ? What capital fun !

“I’ll now to my prayers.”

The mid-day sun

Shines brightly o’er a couch where lies

The perjured OSMADÉL,

Gazed on by two bewitching eyes

Of her who loved him well !

Who watched him in his slumbers calm,

With feelings of deep bliss,

And gathered from his lips the balm

Of love’s ecstatic kiss !

But why does *he* start from the touch of her lip ?

He is seized with a horrible pain in his hip !

He is pierced through his sides, through his arms, through
his back

By a thousand sharp points, as if placed on a rack !

Or more strictly to tell, for description nigh fails,
 AS IF STRETCHED ON A FRAMEWORK OF TENPENNY
 NAILS !

Yet beneath him, in all seeming comfort, there spreads
 The smoothest of linen, the softest of beds.

Hark ! Hark ! to his screams, he is raging with pain ;
 He turns on his back, but his struggles are vain ;
 He howls with the torture, he springs on one side,
 He writhes like an eel, which objects to be fried ;
 Vain, vain are all efforts the spell to evade,
 St. Anthony's bed is too carefully made,
 St. Anthony's will is too potent a thing
 For a sinner like him to break through with a fling ;
 He *must* groan, he *must* suffer, till she he has wronged
 Shall consider his punishment amply prolonged ;
 He must *weep* till she *smiles*, he must *curse* till she *prays*,
 Or St. Anthony's bed will soon finish his days.

But when did woman, kind as fair,
 To mercy turn a deafened ear ?
 To Nature's yearnings ever true
 Be false ? though e'en revenge be due !
 The wife forgot not him she loved
 When tortured by his cry,
 But spake the word which all removed
 His further agony !

St. Anthony prays in his cell e'en yet,
 On his rock so bare and cold,
 The sun of his life has almost set,
 His beads he haswell nigh told.

The Knight in his castle lives hard by

With his lady, so fair and young,

A happier couple beneath the sky

Ne'er left their loves unsung.

Their life is a pattern for all around

Of conjugal truth and bliss,

Their names are in every charity found,

They never do aught amiss !

'Tis whispered they sought, with a delicate hint,

To conquer the old saint's pride,

By helping his penance, so hard and stint,¹

In his cell by the cold hill-side.

But his ear was deaf to each word they said,

Some feathers they took him to make him a bed,

But the Saint he refused, saying "Those which he used

"Were of quality such as might not be abused."

For which truth, as exemplified in their own case,

They thanked him with emphasis deeper than grace,

But both notwithstanding led excellent lives,

The lady shunned *Saints*, the gentleman *WIVES*,

They both eschewed scandal, read good *moral* tales,

And never more slept upon TENPENNY NAILS !

NO. V.—THE ELIXIR OF LIFE.

A LEGEND OF ST. MONDAY.

The night was dark, the wind was high,
While vivid lightnings rent the sky ;
The wild winds blew a hurricane,
As up the waters of the Seine
A tiny shallop urged its course
Against the current's downward force,
To where a little islet stood
Encompassed by its rising flood.

That little isle was then, as now, a city famed as fair,
For Paris is, and Paris was, and long shall flourish there,
And though a thousand years have swept the tide of
time along,
That city, scarcely old as yet, was even then not young.

That tiny shallop reached the shore, its owner outward
stept,
Scarce waiting to secure his craft, but on his errand swept,
Nor drew his breath, nor slacked his speed, till near a
portal high,
Whose grim monastic battlements frowned 'gainst the
darkling sky.

His errand was of life or death to one he loved full well,
The aid he sought was 'neath that roof, but where he
 could not tell,
Nor how to gain an entrance 'mid that dark o'erhanging
 gloom,
Where all was secret as the night and silent as the tomb.
The tall twin-towers of Notre Dame, by lightning's flash
 revealed,
Looked on that monastery down (which darkness all con-
 cealed),
Beneath whose roof a stranger monk, whose name no man
 could tell,
Had sought for many a weary year in solitude to dwell.
His fame was great throughout the land, as far as fame
 could travel,
But whence he came, and what his age, no mortal could
 unravel.

Howe'er he lived no tongue could tell,
But that he lived extremely well
Was plainly written on his face,
Where many a flower of ruddy grace,
From peony to blushing rose,
Took refuge . . . round about his nose,
And plainly spoke, as words could speak,
He fasted not through all the week.

No matter, he had gained a name for alchemy, not
 fasting,
And many deemed the secret his of youth for everlasting,

The elixir of eternal life long sought by mortal brain,
Was his, at least men whispered so, and whispered rather
plain,
For, certes, he wrought wondrous cures when "Doctors
were in vain."

Whate'er his age, a monk he seemed, a "Monk of orders
grey,"
And though of questionable lore, held scatheless on his
way,
For while the Church was rather strict with folk of lax
professions,
And very often levied fines on men of large possessions,
Yet *he* was never harmed, although a knight of high
renown
Was roasted at his own fireside for failing to kneel down
When through the streets a bishop rode the multitude to
bless,
With lighted candles by *his* side to make *their* darkness
less.
Our monk, or doctor (which you please), abided no
control
Of king, or bishop, law or priest, o'er body or o'er soul ;
But did whate'er he willed to do, unchallenged on his
way,
A living, breathing mystery, a riddle of his day ;
His secret we may not disclose, but haste our tale to
tell,
To speak of him who came to seek, and what there next
befel.

The youth, our hero, strove to find by groping in the
dark

An entrance to that frowning pile which looked so grim
and stark ;

But no, all efforts seemed in vain, till, by good luck at
last,

He found, in some small cavity, a wicket *not* made fast ;
Perhaps the weary janitor whose place it was to lock it
Had gone to sleep and kept the key, for safety, in his
pocket ;

Perhaps the man was—never mind, it matters not a
rush.

The gate itself was fastened not, it yielded with a push,
Good manners, nathless, bade him knock ere daring to
walk in ;

He did so once, he did so twice, a most effective din,
Till, finding no one answered, and ill choosing to be
balked,

He pushed the gate, strode quickly in, and onward
boldly stalked ;

Now reeling, in his progress dark, 'gainst some obstructive
wall,

Now struggling up a flight of steps, now stumbling nigh
to fall,

Now following up some fancied clue a passage to explore,
Till led by music's luring voice he reached a *fastened*
door,

Whence came forth echoes passing strange for that abode
of grace,

“ A sound of revelry by night,” extremely out of place.

What was't he heard in chorus loud ? a song of grace or prayer ?

Or both perchance. For holy monks alone abided there.

A chaunt, whose long drawn cadence fell

Upon his senses like a spell,

As nigh to making him forget

His errand, uncompleted yet.

He listened. Might it come to pass

Those monks were holding midnight mass ?

And yet—'twas strange !—if such could be,

For, 'midst the deep-toned harmony

Of manly bass, he heard the strain

Of female trebles, very plain ;

And, greatly wondering, listened on

With ears that drank in every tone,

Till listening lulled him in a dream

Of holy exultation,

That carried him, as in a stream

Of pure imagination.

He *seemed* to hear a heavenly choir, inviting his response,

So tuned his voice to concert-pitch, and braced him up

at once,

Loud crying out—with lungs of brass—but still with due

decorum,

“Laudamus te—laudamus te—In secula seculorum !”

Then, falling on his bended knees, he knocked head,

nose, and chin,

'Gainst something very hard indeed, *and burst a
portal in !*

Hey, Presto ! What a change of scene ! From darkness
into light !

And what a vast "sensation" made his trembling into
sight !

But, ere we venture to explain what *came* of such mis-
carriage,

We'll tell what 'twas our hero *saw*, nor sober truth dis-
parage.

Within a hall lit up like day, by lamps full many a score,
And round about a table sate two dozen monks or more,
With each a damsel on his knee, attired in virgin white,
Like holy nuns of high degree—a most imposing sight ?

A jewelled cup each hand held up,
High fill'd, but not with wine,
Yet something which had savour rich,
If odour might define.
A liquid sparkling as the day,
As beautiful—as bright,
With strength to steal men's brains away,
And steep their souls in night ;
The Doctor-monk he came to seek
Was in his glory there,
And occupied—we grieve to speak—
The presidential chair !

While all—methinks we see them now, in goodly row
before us—

Gave forth—with one accord and voice—a jolly DRINK-
ING CHORUS !

Hey, Presto ! With a fearful shriek each virgin nun
rose up,
Each dashed upon that chamber floor her jewell'd drink-
ing cup !
Each vanished through an opening slide made in that
chamber wall,
But not without some tripping up and many a stagger-
ing fall !
The monks !—good fellows, every one—though taken
sore aback,
Show'd more of stupor than surprise—for truly and alack !
While struggling vaguely to rise up, but four alone
were able,
And so roll'd, helpless, on the ground, beneath the
banquet table.
Not thus, the "DOCTOR-MONK"—for he, uprising in a
trice,
With iron grip our hero seized, and held as in a vice,
For, towering seven feet high, at least, he held his victim
tight,
Without the power to speak or move. Alas ! unhappy
wight !
One moment's pause—then, with a voice like some
vexed tiger's roar,
Thus spake the monk, "How cam'st thou here through
yonder shattered door ?
"What thing art thou that dar'st intrude upon our holy
mirth ?
"What seek'st thou in this sacred place, thou reptile of
the earth ?

“Speak, slave—or die !”

“I’d rather live,” our hero quickly spoke,

“For really my reception here’s a very sorry joke,

“I came, dread monk, through *open* door to beg thy
leechcraft power,

“For one I love more dearly than the dew-drop loves
the flower ;

“For one whose life is ebbing fast, unless thou deign’st
to save,

“For one whose beauty should not pass thus early to the
grave ;

“Oh grant, dread Father, this my prayer—and Heaven
will surely bless

“The life-elixir which men say thou truly dost possess.”

“Humph !—is that all ?”—The monk spoke on, relax-
ing his strong hold,

“And yet methinks ’tis over much for one so rashly
bold,

“But since thine eyes have this night seen what eyes
ne’er saw before,

“*A sight the which no babbling tongue must ever speak of
more,*

“*On pain of death*, thy wish I grant—but firstly, SWEAR
THE OATH.”

“I swear,” replied our hero—and “Amen” responded both.

“This Phial take,” replied the monk, “and to thy
lady give

“Six tablespoons—o’erbrimming full—if thou would’st
have her live,

“With just so much lump-sugar, say a half-ounce or a quarter,

“As may suffice to sweeten well a cup of boiling water.

“And now, one taste before thou goest of that we drink this night,

“In token of the oaths thou’st sworn to keep with all thy might.”

Another phial brought he then, of somewhat bulkier note,
Then *poured one pint of eau-de-vie adown his victim’s throat!*
Loud chuckling, as he turned aside, “Ha, ha! be thine to deem

“When sober, at return of day, thou’st dreamt a dreadful dream.”

’Twas liquid fire our hero drank . . .

. . . The hall spun round and round ;

He saw ten thousand dancing stars, then fell upon the ground,

And slept the sleep of innocence till twelve o’clock next day,

Then woke up in a beetroot field, from Paris far away.

He sought his home, he found his wife uprisen and quite well

(The doctor’s happy absence *may* have saved her—who can tell ?)

He tried his recipe on both with infinite delight,
And vowed the monk who gave it him must be a saint outright.

AND SO HE WAS, for at his death the Pope, who owned
his merit,
Translated him to realms above, with unctuous zeal and
spirit,
Because—and here the truth leaks out—in striving to
discover
The secret of eternal youth—eternal wisdom's lover—
He truly did invent THE STILL, and found it vastly
handy
For brewing, in his secret haunt, the very best of brandy.
By means of which he gained himself a fame of high
renown
With those who kept their spirits up by pouring spirits
down.
But whether for man's good or ill,
Or for some motive stronger,
He kept the secret of his skill
Till it would keep no longer.
He died, without one warning call,
The day which follows Sunday ;
And, as he owned no name at all,
They gave him this, "SAINT MONDAY."

NO. VI.—THE LOBSTER GHOST.

A LEGEND OF NETLEY ABBEY.

I could a tail unfold.

HAMLET.

I.

In years gone by, when Netley's gorgeous fane
Was in its glory,
Or—to be more precise—in Richard's reign,
So famed in story
(We mean the lion-hearted one, of course,
Not him who cried "My kingdom for a horse"),
There dwelt a monk rotund, or, if you'd rather,
We'll say there lived a portly Holy Father,
Whose taste in feeding was so very queer,
He cared not half a dump for beef or beer,
Nor veal nor mutton, nor, indeed, for pork,
Nor *paté-de-foix-gras*, nor ham from York.
"From all things carnivorous,"
He prayed, "The Lord deliver us,"
Yet grew so fat and rosy,
So round and cosy,
That all his brother monks became astonished,
While he was not unfrequently "admonished"
For bringing scandal on a lean community,
By growing stout upon small opportunity.

II.

The fact was this—our monk of Netley Abbey,
 Though hating *flesh* since first he was a “babby,”
 Had so much love for *fish* that ’twas his bent
 To make the live-long year one rigorous “Lent.”

On salmon he doated,

On turbot he gloated,

In whiting and lampreys his taste was much noted.
 But chiefly on fish, all whose bones were *outside*
 (Both Cuvier and Buffon such *fish*-dom deride),
 Like oysters and crabs did he mostly incline,
 While lobsters he *worshipp’d* with honour divine.

III.

Now, fish such as these was a luxury known
 To the “upper-class” monks of that abbey alone ;
 Not to “brothers” like him, all friendless and poor
 (Whose diet we haste now to mention,

In order that all who now read may feel sure
 We write with an honest intention.)

They’d flesh on but one day

(Of course that was Sunday), *

With lettuce on Wednesday, and Tuesday, and
 Monday.

Then, radish or lentils the rest of the week

(The merits of which it behoves not to speak).

One small matter else only needs but be known,

They had salt as a relish *on Saints’-days alone*.

IV.

Now, "Peter," our monk—for such was his name—
No relation, we think, to the "Hermit" of fame,
Held lettuce, and radish, and lentils, all three,
In as utter abhorrence as drunkards hold tea ;

So contrived, as men say,
In some underhand way,
By giving one "BRAMBLE,"
A robber from Hamble,*

Whose race through life's course was one villanous
scramble,
Three times every week "absolution" from sin,
Whatever foul scrape he might chance to fall in.

V.

This "Bramble" robb'd travellers, far off and near,
This "Bramble" cut throats very often, we fear,
This "Bramble" kissed maids as they should not be
kissed,

This "Bramble" *found* cattle before they were *missed* ;
But in deepest distress
Ne'er failed to "confess"

(Whenever he found himself out of the "mess")
To our Monk, taking always beneath his loose dress
Choice lobsters, or crabs,
Or flounders, or dabs,

* A fishing village a short distance from Netley Abbey.

Or salmon—well dried,
Or turbot—well fried.

In short,

What he thought

The most pleasing of aught,

In exchange for his “shrift,” which Monk “Peter”
cut short,

Much shorter indeed

Than the act seemed to need,

But then, only consider, he wanted his “feed !”

VI.

This odd course of things had its evil and good

As “Peter,” our Monk, found too surely,

When “robbery” throve *he* had plenty of food,

When “plunder” was scarce *he* fared poorly.

In brief, ’twas exceedingly easy to tell

When “Bramble” did badly, or middling, or well,

By a glance at Monk “Peter,” whose stomach would
swell

Like a mountain, or *shrink* like a cavernous dell.

Per example—one time when our robber was ill,

Undergoing a course of extremely blue-pill,

For three weeks or a month our poor Monk grew so
thin

That his bones stared with horror from out of his
skin,

And his shadow grew pale with the fright it was in ;

While his friends in the abbey,
Though most of them flabby
And dabby, and crabby,
Took counsel betwixt in a manner most shabby,
Anent the expedience of—(how shall we tell-it-on)—
Making him “show” as a real living-skeleton?

VII.

But time passed away, our “robber” got well,
And throve once again, as histories tell,
He had “luck” with some PILGRIMS, whose prayers were
all vain,
He had “luck” with a MILLER, a great rogue-in-grain,
He had “luck” with a KNIGHT,
Who had dined and was “tight,”
So could not on horseback sit very upright.
He had “luck” with two YEOMEN of Surrey and Kent,
Who carried between them their whole “yearly rent,”
He had “luck” with an ABBOT, whose mitre so fine
He filled to the brim with its owner’s best wine,
Then quaffed to his “blessing,” while gaily he took
From his worshipful presence his “hook” and his
“crook.”

At length, almost tired of his “luck” for the nonce,
And in view of his soul’s constitution,
He bethought him to seek his friend “Peter” at
once
For an absolute absolution!

VIII.

He pack'd up most carefully—all fully grown—
 Two dozen fat lobsters beneath his long gown
 (Or jerkin, whichever you please it to call,
 We don't think the thing really matters at all),
 Then hied to Monk "Peter" and cast off the load
 From his back, and his conscience as well,
 And took to his old occupation—"The Road"—
 Leaving "Peter," our Monk, in his cell,
 His beads to tell,
 While the curfew-bell
 Rang out *like a funeral knell* !

IX.

The night was dark, the night was drear,
 The vesper chime had rung,
 Deep silence reigned both far and near,
 Fair NETLEY'S walks among.
 Our Monk upon his pallet lay,
 His holy duties done,
 But, ah? those lobsters! Where were they?
 HE'D EATEN EVERY ONE!!!
 Of twice a dozen all had fled,
 The way such things oft go,
They left, alas! their ocean bed
 To be "tuck'd in"—just so!
 Oh! Oh! Oh!

X.

Upon his back the good Monk lay,
His eyelids closed in sleep,
His nose gave forth, as noses may,
A sound long, loud, and deep.
His mouth—wide open—seem'd a cave
(Or simile must fail),
Whence forth there peeped, as from a grave,
One buried lobster's tail.
But though asleep, if such may be,
And dead to outward scan,
A DREAM, of horrible degree,
Oppressed his inward man.
A rush of waters filled his ear,
A vision met his sight,
A MONSTER, ten feet high (*or near,*
We love to measure right).
A thing betwixt a fish and beast,
All black as sable night,
With claws, like jaws, or such at least
As seemed that fearful sight.
A LOBSTER of gigantic size,
To make the matter plain,
Which "jumped" upon his stomach's rise,
And made him "howl" with pain.
"Base mortal," spoke the ghastly thing,
"Prepare a death to die,
"A death of tenfold torturous sting,
"And this—the reason why—

“ You boiled my father and my brother,

“ You made a salad of my mother,

“ You hack’d my sister into pieces,

“ You pickled all my pretty nieces ;

“ My uncles perished ’neath your jaw,

“ My aunts lie buried in your maw,

“ For which base deed the gods who dwell

“ In ocean’s cave below

“ Consign you to a watery hell,

“ Where straightway you must go.

“ Thus—thus—I claim thee.”

. In a trice

The horrid MONSTER seized

Monk “ Peter ” in his claw-like vice

And squeezed—and squeezed—and squeezed,

Until Monk “ Peter’s ” face was black

As some Egyptian mummy,

And poor Monk “ Peter’s ” tongue—alack,

Was mute as any dummy.

Until—in brief—Monk “ Peter ” lay

After that monstrous “ feed ”

A thing of senseless, soddened clay,

Extremely dead indeed.

“ Ha ! Ha ! ” A voice rung in the air,

“ Thus ends yon saintly mocker,

“ And now—to seek *my* ocean lair,

“ In Davy Jones’s locker !!

But when—next day—the prior came,
 To Peter's lonely cell,
No Peter answered to his name,
 As might be guessed right well.
For—in his love for lobster-food
 At hunger's extra call—
We grieve to make it understood,
 He'd swallow'd—SHELLS AND ALL !

No. VI.—THE BELLS OF AGINCOURT.¹

A LEGEND OF MONMOUTH.

“’Twas night--and darkness” over Gallia’s plain,
Nor moon nor star gave forth its trembling light
To bless the sylvan haunts of shepherd swain,
Or dance upon the waters like a sprite ;
Heaven frown’d on all things that most solemn night,
Wherein the hosts of England’s proudest foe

¹ Spelt Azincourt in most of the old chronicles. The story of which—like that of the bells in question, is shrouded in much obscurity. It was my original intention to have written a strictly historical ballad upon this subject ; but the more it was attempted to ascertain real facts, the more apocryphal did all received anecdotes appear, indeed, so much so, that it was deemed expedient, after all, to assume a poetical fiction—based only upon the presumed fact ; which accordingly has been done. Touching these bells, it would appear, from the late Mr. Heath’s account, that they were those of the port from which Henry embarked rather than those of Agincourt ; but there is no proof of this, nor indeed any proof of the matter at all, further than that some bells were brought from France by Henry the 5th, two of which were lost at sea, and the remaining number appropriated as is well known ; even the story of the re-casting of these bells by Mr. Rudder of Gloucester is enveloped in romance, for it is whispered that gold, silver, and even jewels were thrown into the cauldron of boiling metal. This is, however, beside the subject. All I would wish to be understood is that I have taken this story as seemed best suited to the purposes of a “ Romance,” which the reader will kindly consider it to be.

Look'd down with scorn on MONMOUTH'S² hapless
plight,
And mock'd his feebleness with braggart show !

What sound is that which rends the sky
In cadence loud and long ?
It is a sound of minstrelsy
Of ribald jest and song !
What light is that with ruddy glare
Which mounts to yonder cloud ?
'Tis theirs that feast, and feasting dare
Such deeds as ring aloud !

The chivalry of puissant France, who sheath the sword
and pile the lance,
To cast them lots³ for England's King, Behold ! E'en
now the die they fling,
Stake fancied gold in plenteous store, Or wager damsels
by the score,⁴
And witless bid some ring a knell, On yonder neighbour-
ing convent's bell.

² Henry 5th surnamed "of Monmouth," which was his native town.

³ It is an authentic fact that two knights, "Louis de Bourneville" and "Gustave de St. Aumale," who were "confreres" after the fashion of their time, did actually cast lots for the honour of appropriating the personal ransom of our English "Harry" in the event of their joint efforts being sufficient TO TAKE HIM PRISONER ! Oh ! that they had lived to read "Mrs. Glasse," who wrote "first catch your hare."

⁴ The anticipated capture of our English maidens led to such wagers being made.

To toll the doom of BRITAIN'S might
Upon that dark and starless night.
Ding-dong Ding-dong Ding-dong dell
List ! To the deep-toned convent bell !

Yet hark ! Another sound draws nigh
In cadence sweet and clear,
Which breathes no thought of revelry,
But one of lowly prayer !
Another light is shining too
Amidst the gloom of Heaven,
'Tis theirs that kneel, and kneeling sue
'Fore God—to be forgiven !⁵

'Tis Britain's host in numbers small, Resolved to fight or
fighting fall,
Who set no store on limb or life, But don each buckler
for the strife,
Thong well each bow—poise well each lance—Nor vainly
scorn the power of France,
But yet with courage boldly sing “God bless great Harry
—thrice a King !”

And may each coward LIVE to shame
Who fears to DIE for England's fame !
Ding-dong Ding-dong Ding-dong dell,
Hark ! To the solemn passing bell !

⁵ Whilst the army of King Charles was rioting in feasting and debauchery, the hosts of England were engaged in fasting and praying.

“What means yon funeral note?” King Henry cried ;
“It means OUR knell,” a Brother’s⁶ voice replied.
“God’s faith !”⁷ again spoke he of kingly trust,
“It may ring THEIRS ! whilst Heaven protects the just !”

Uprose the golden fingered Sun In robes of purple dight !
A glorious field to shine upon As ever owned his might !
An hundred thousand⁸ glittering crests Each mirror’d
back his ray,
An hundred thousand mail-clad breasts All proud in
war’s array,
An hundred thousand arms of might grasped bow or
blade or spear,
All eager for the coming fight—All enemies to fear ;
E’en they—the TITHE of all that host⁹ Brave England’s
loyal few,
Who counted life too small a cost With HONOR still in view.
E’en THEY the onset proudly made With bowmen stout
and tall,
Nor tarried yet when, all dismay’d, Two thousand French-
men fall,¹⁰

⁶ The Duke of Bedford—the King’s brother.

⁷ This was Henry’s usual oath.

⁸ One hundred thousand is the generally received opinion of the united strength of both armies—but no two records coincide.

⁹ Ten thousand was certainly the entire number of fighting men in the British army—some historians place it at eight thousand only.

¹⁰ Two thousand of the enemy are said to have fallen from bowshots only, and that at the onset of the engagement.

But charged still on—still hotly on—Like some strong
torrent's force,
Which brooks no curb its power upon, But rushes on its
course.

And where is HE—the brave and young
Who leads this patriot band ?
Behold him—midst the glorious throng,
Imperious to command !
See ! Where he bends him o'er his steed,
By Heaven ! His life is o'er—
Yet no ! He rights again with speed,
More kingly than before !
He deals a death in every blow,
His eye commands the field,
He lays an hundred nobles low,
And bids their legions yield.
Nor thus alone doth England's might
Its conquering arm display,
Each Baron bold, each stalwart knight,
Hath borne him well to-day.
Nor breathed there one of lowlier fame
So poor—so base a slave,
But earned that hour a soldier's fame,
Or filled a patriot's grave.

The battle done, The victory nobly won,
Who now so meek as England's regal son ?
“ Give Heaven all praise—Not ours the glory be,
“ But HIS who formed the skies—the earth—the sea.

“God’s mighty name let all our prayers invoke !

“How call they yonder tower ?”¹¹

Thus briefly spoke

The youthful hero—not in boastful pride,

But calm decision—Whilst a voice replied

“’Tis call’d—dread Sovereign—that of Agincourt.”

“Then be so named this battle we have fought,”

Quoth England’s Harry—who not pomp nor power

Could win from grateful thanks in that proud hour,

Which swept the clouds of doubt from hope’s bright sky

To show the sun of glorious victory !

Tis o’er—’tis o’er—The day is past—The clash of arms
is still at last,

The legions of a conquered foe In shame or death are
humbled now,

And England’s host, a valiant band, Prepare to leave the
Gallic strand,

They seek their ships !—when hark ! a sound bursts
through the air with joyous bound,

What is’t ? A Bell !—aye one, two, three, And twice as
many—rung with glee,

No solemn knell is theirs I trow—No dirge-like note of
sorrow now,

But rather joy.

¹¹ The exact sense of these words are made use of on the occasion according to ALL authorities.

“What means yon strain?”

Quoth Royal Harry yet again,

“Methinks it jars right viciously

“Upon an hour wherein men die—

“What deed is this without a name!

“Doth Frenchmen sorrow THUS for shame?”

“They sorrow not—Great England’s King—

“They sorrow not that peal who ring,

“But cast your glory in the slime

“With every note of that rude chime,

“And hail your parting nigh at hand

“From this your own thrice conquered land.”

“God’s faith! (’Twas thus King Henry swore,)

“Be SUCH their theme! Then never more

“In this the land which gave them birth

“Shall ring such notes of idle mirth.

“Unslung each bell from roof or tower

“And bear them o’er the main,

“A pledge of England’s slighted power,

“But slighted NOT IN VAIN!

“A goodlier home they soon shall find

“My native hills among,

“Where men are brave—and maids are kind,

“And honour rules the throng.

“Adown the stream of gentle Wye,

“Shall flow their tuneful melody,

“And Monnow’s tower—and Monnow’s tide,

“Shall own them with a fitting pride.

“ This swear WE now—while yet THEY ring,
“ And Heaven RECORDS me, England’s King !”

’Tis done—’tis done—Britannia’s sun shines o’er those
sacred bells,

And what a deed of noble meed Their solemn history
tells !

The voice of nigh five hundred years Is in their iron
tongue,

What countless joys—what countless fears Their metal
chime hath sung !

And oh ! how sweetly through the air

Their melody yet swells,

When calling to the house of prayer,

Those merry MONMOUTH bells !

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE.—It is a somewhat curious fact, and strangely illustrative of Gallic character, that in most of their modern maps the name of “ Agincourt ” does not appear at all—it is blotted out of all documentary record—but whether such will blot it out of history is quite another thing—English history will never be without it, though all else die.

No. VII.—“JOSEPHINE.”

The *Daily Telegraph* of some few years ago relates, as a fact, that a certain NUN, being unable to recover by legal means a debt of several thousand francs, was told by the BISHOP OF MALINES to supplicate the figure of St. Joseph in a neighbouring church to intercede for her. She did so, and immediately recovered the debt through the Saint's interposition.

LEGEND.

Oh ! List to the story of Miss Josephine,
A damsel unfavoured by chance,
Who, left a lone orphan at sweet seventeen,
Set up a small shop in a place called “MALINES,”
For selling the liquors of France.

She dealt in Absinthe, Ordinaire, Eau-de-vie,
Champagne, both Möet and Cliquot,
Beaujollais, Epernez, Montfaçon, Chablis,
With Claret of oldest and youngest degree,
The best and the worst of Bordeaux.

She was not good looking, in fact “au contraire,”
The women all voted her “plain,”
She'd the vilest of squints and the reddest of hair ;
Her complexion was also extremely un-fair,
Notwithstanding all which she was vain.

With hope to get married she ogled and sighed,
Behind her small "cabaret" bar,
Got "cut" for her squint, had her hair nicely dyed,
Wore stays laced up tight (with some padding inside),
And played on the Spanish guitar.

But the men—horrid monsters!—fought shy of her charms
(True valour should never be rash),
Their love was unmingled with Cupid's alarms,
They rushed to her wine-shop, but not to her arms,
And paid, not in kisses, but cash!

For twenty long years did Miss Josephine thrive
(Though by rights we should say "Madoiselle"),
Her riches increased like the store of a hive,
Where the busy bee ceases not daily to strive,
And adds to the wealth of her cell.

Till nigh upon "forty," that sad bourne of fate,
From which no born woman can run,
She sickened of hope, took to piety—late,
Turned her *love* for base man into venomous *hate*,
And changed herself into a NUN!

Yet think not, while yielding her person to Heaven,
She gave up her wealth gained on Earth;
Ah! no—the hard cash which for years had been striven,
She placed in a bank where good interest was given,
Like one who well counted its worth.

Not quite all ; for some six thousand francs, be it told,
Was due to Miss Josephine still,
From the vintner who purchased the shop she had
sold,
But who could not pay *all* in silver or gold,
And so put her off with a " Bill."

'Twas a rare cunning trick, for he thought that a NUN
Could bring neither " action " nor " plaint,"
So he counted his creditor pretty well " done,"
And chuckled in secrecy over the fun
Of swindling an Embryo Saint.

But he reckoned quite wrongly, as most persons will
Who take small account of their host,
For when due some endorser presented that " Bill,"
Which *he* failed to " take up " (*though he'd cash in his
till*),
And made the transaction his boast.

The billbroker hastened to Miss Josephine,
Not over well pleased, be it said.
He found her *a figure not fit to be seen*,
Doing penance *for something which should not have been*,
With a " duster " wound over her head.*

* See the celebrated " Starr Trial," wherein a " duster " thrown over the head was veritably imposed as a penance.

On hearing the news she turned pale with dismay,
But cunningly veiled her chagrin.

“Go, tell him,” she said, in her amiable way,
“I send a collector who’ll soon make him pay,
“Or my name is not Miss Josephine.”

She went to her cell, where an image hung high,
St. Joseph of Arimathea ;
She told him her tale, with a sob and a sigh,
She showed him the “bill,” with a tear in her eye,
And begged that he righted would see her !

Next day, while her debtor was serving out wine,
An elderly gentleman came—
In dress like a friar, in aspect divine,
Who said, “Pay this bill for a client of mine,
Or bear what shall follow the blame.”

“I won’t,” quoth the vintner ; “Then mark,” quoth the
saint
(For of course it was Joseph himself),
“I’ll return this day week to renew my complaint,
“Meanwhile, an embargo, by way of a taint,
I lay upon cellar and shelf.”

The saint hied away. Three customers came
With cheerfulness stamped on their faces.
Each called for his “glass,” absinthe was its name,
But scarcely had each one put lips to the same
Than he made the most hideous grimaces.

“ ‘Ventre bleu,’ ‘Sacre toi,’ ‘A la Diable,’ ” they cried,

“ What rascals you wine selling men are !

“ We asked for absinthe, and have paid for beside,

“ ‘Tis a liquor no Frenchman of sense can deride,

“ But you’ve dosed us with rhubarb and senna ! ”

Their host looked amazed, and so tasted the stuff,

With an air of extreme self-possession,

But one single drop was indeed “ quantum suff.,”

’Twas what chemists all dub a “ black draught,” sure
enough,

And nasty beyond all expression.

Forebodings came on, he uncorked some Bordeaux,

Well knowing its virtues and faults ;

’Twas decoction of aloes, of wormwood and sloe,

Likewise his CHAMPAGNE, both Mœt and Cliquot,

While his CHABLIS was mere GLANBER SALTS !

He tasted all round, every bottle and cask,

In cellar, on counter, on shelf,

But vain was all labour, most wretched the task,

There was nothing but *physis* in bottle or flask,

As sadly he proved to himself.

So he shut up his shop for the rest of the week

And took in a fresh stock of wine,

Determined in future a good name to seek

By selling good things (a remarkable freak

In one of the publican line).

But with the first dawn of his re-opening day,
And ere he'd one coin in his till,
There came the same friar, who asked him to pay
(In a very decided yet amiable way)
Miss Josephine's dishonoured bill.

Once more he refused, and once more did the Saint
(For the Saint and the Friar were one)
Depart on his errand with just the same plaint—
“I grant you one week, but meanwhile bear the taint
“Of that you so basely have done.”

No sooner alone was our host in his shop
Than he laughed, in his folly, right out,
When “Bang” went each bung in his cellar, and “Pop”
Each cork from each bottle, while forth every drop
Of their liquor went streaming about.

It ran through his door to the gutters outside,
Its flood he obstructed in vain,
The little boys opened their little eyes wide,
And shouted with joy as its course they descried,
Believing it red-coloured rain.

Their mothers, too, came with platter and dish
And basin, to ladle it out;
Some drank as it ran, like bibulous fish,
Some drank out of shoes to the full of their wish,
And reeled, like blind toppers, about.

Some stored it in bottles (well mingled with mud),
To drink at the close of the day ;
But the vintner who owned it despairingly stood,
As he thought on the Friar, with sorrowful mood,
For the rest of that terrible day.

“’Tis the Devil himself,” our host loudly cried,
His voice by ill luck sadly shaken ;
“But if, by such tricks as the one just now tried,
“He thinks I shall pay him, with interest beside,
“He’ll find himself greatly mistaken.”

Once more, at the ending of seven days’ flight,
He took to his shop a fresh stock ;
His corks he wired down and his bungs he nailed tight,
Determined no force short of Satan’s worst might
Again at his fortunes should mock.

Once more came the Friar, presenting his “Bill,”
Once more did the debtor refuse ;
He had money galore in the depths of his till,
But to pay a just debt was no part of his will,
So he shouted “To pay I don’t choose.”

“Then take,” quoth the Friar, “my last parting gift,”
As gently he *tweaked* the man’s nose,
And vanished
. . . . without even deigning to lift
One glance towards the debtor, who hugged his own thrift,
And turned to enjoy his repose.

But e'en as he turned in his triumph away,
He felt a slight twitching sensation,
His nasal protub'rance grew—how shall we say ?
Not hot, nor yet cold, in an usual way,
But still, with an odd irritation.

He scratched it with vigour, he scratched it again,
The tingling grew worse than before,
He scratched and he scratched, well nigh maddened
with pain,
But all his hard scratching was scratching in vain,
He scratched till he could not scratch more.

He rushed to a mirror, he looked on his face ;
O, Horror ! Could such thing be true ?
His nose, while he scratched it, had lengthened apace,
And e'en while yet watching, with frightened grimace,
Still longer the wretched thing grew !

Two inches per hour was the rate of its growth,
He watched it the whole blessed day,
And scratched all the time, though to do so was loath,
With one hand at first, but afterwards both,
He could not keep either away.

He hastened to bed with his mind ill at rest,
He hid his face under the clothes,
But woke up next morn with his fears unredresst,
For twenty-four inches he sadly confest,
Had lengthened the point of his nose.

Thus growing at forty-eight inches per day,
In a week it so lengthy was found ;
He strove round his body to coil it away,
Till, poor wretched vintner ! we tremble to say,
It nearly reached on to the ground.

The sight was "a caution," no rest could he find,
His torments grew stronger and stronger !
The weight of his nose was a weight on his mind,
So long did it grow past what nature designed,
That he really could bear it NO LONGER.

At length came repentance, with heart very sore,
He hastened to Miss Josephine,
He sought out her convent, he knocked at the door
(Twelve little boys carried his nose on before),
And beg'd she would quickly be seen.

She came at his beck (with no duster at all
On her head, to look dirtily funny)
He cringed at her feet, kissed the hem of her "fall,"
He prayed her the Saint's fearful gift to recall,
AND PAID EVERY FRANC OF THE MONEY !

Back homeward he trudged (it was just half a mile)
And found, to his joyful surprise,
That his nasal protub'rance grew shorter the while,
Till he reached his own door, when he saw with a smile,
It had shrunk to its natural size !

MORAL.

Don't swindle at all ! lest in fortune's swift race
 You chance to get left in the lurch ;
To swindle at all is a deed without grace,
But if you *must* swindle, to keep with the pace,
 Don't swindle A SAINT OF THE CHURCH !

THE FALL OF PARIS.

JANUARY, 1871.

Not to the iron storm of shot or shell,
Imperial Paris—"Queen of Cities"—fell,
Not to the thunders of beleag'ring foe !
Not to Heaven's mimic lightning here below !
 Not to the dash of battle's flash,
 Not to the combat-grand of warriors hand to
 hand,
Where courage, truth, and sacred honour throw,
Their halo round the victor's laurell'd brow !
Not 'midst the sonorous din which notes afar
"The pomp and circumstance of glorious war !"
 To none of such brave foes
 As chivalry yet knows,
 Or Christian tolerance, with many a sigh,
Accords to hush within her conscience-cry.

But to gaunt FAMINE ! conqueror most foul !
That Demon, born of want !—That human Ghoul !
Whose jaws distending, pestilent and wide,
Are all remorseless, like to Ocean's tide
Which swallows, and still swallows, rolling on—
A silent vanquisher that spares, for none.

Brave men were there to guard each bastion'd wall,
Fair women to uphold true honour's call,
Sweet children, whose pure lips, devoid of guile,
Spoke wondering words that forced the pitying smile ;
But manly strength, and woman's potent love,
Were powerless alike their foe to move,
Strength became *weakness* 'neath gaunt *Famine's* touch,
Sustaining *love*, through tension over-much,
Grew nerveless to do battle with that hour
Of nature's want, and hunger's ruthless power.

Old men, with feeble cry,
Were left to slowly die !
Babes, yet unborn, within their mother's womb,
Found, in their innocence, a living tomb ;
Happier than they who pined away
Upon their mother's breast—To sink at rest,
For lack of that which HEAVEN had all supplied,
Till MAN, in *Christian mockery*, denied.
Oh ! what a sight of proud humility,
LUTITIA ! in her morning garb was there ;
A weeping mother, 'neath a weeping sky ;
A widowed GODDESS in her deep despair.

Her iron-girdle tightly drawn,
Her agonies all laughed to scorn,
Her children, such as death had spared
(In luxury of habit reared),
To such base craving doomed at last,
As made it *luxury to fast*,
Almost TO DIE !

While he whose scorpion-rod
 Posterity will call THE "SCOURGE OF GOD,"
 A second "ATILLA," looked on each day
 With eyes all pitiless, YET DARED TO PRAY !
 And thanked that PROVIDENCE which gave him power
 (More great than Samson, in his dying hour)
 To slay ten thousand by one mortal blow,
 His lust of conquest and of pride to show,
 And wherefore ?

But to clutch a shadowy crown,
 Jewelled with orphans' tears !—His loftier Throne
 A Golgotha !—His Robe-Imperial dyed
 With blood of Patriots whom his wrath defied,
 His conquering hosts, a licensed robber-band,
 His vast inheritance, one mourning land.

'Tis done ! two flags o'ertop that City's wall—
 " KING FAMINE'S," and " KING WILLIAM'S " conquerors
 tall !

Twin " MOLOCHS " side by side, they fitly show
 The right of might in this our realm below,
 Where mercy, born of justice, hides for shame,
 And Christians blush for their dishonour'd name.
 Henceforth let Pagans boast their milder code,
 That strikes to *kill*, not *torture* by the road,
 Which claims no high behest of moral law,
 To stay the sword which *vengeance* fain would draw,
 Nor owns the mocking phrase of " Peace on Earth,
 Good will to men "—Let future times give birth
 To future verdict—This be ours, to-day.

“ A ruthless deed for sorrow to repay !

“ A crime of crimes for ages yet unborn

“ To bear the penalty, while yet they mourn !

“ A Cadmus-sowing, to be reaped in steel,

“ Whose harvest growth such horrors must reveal

“ As history's pen hath ne'er recorded yet,

“ And when recorded, never can forget !”

Just Heaven ! avert from England's sacred fame

The lust of conquest burthen'd with its shame,

But if, at honour's call, she deigns to fight,

Then—WAR BE HERS, and GOD DEFEND THE RIGHT.”

SELECTIONS

FROM THE VERSIFIED PORTION OF A
SACRED ORATORIO, "ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST."

WRITTEN AND COMPOSED, 1830

OPENING CHORUS—SING TO JEHOVAH !

Sing to JEHOVAH. O, sing to the Lord,
Be joyful and praise Him in tuneful accord,
Praise we JEHOVAH, who governs alone,
The earth is His footstool ; the heavens are His throne.
Praise Him, ye mountains ; praise Him, ye hills ;
Praise Him, ye fountains ; praise Him, ye rills ;
Praise Him, ye deserts, where hot winds abide,
Praise Him, ye valleys, where cool waters glide,
Praise Him, ye nations with joyful accord,
Oh ! Sing to JEHOVAH. Oh ! Sing to the Lord.

QUARTETTE.

List ! List ! 'Tis the cry of a sinner despairing !
'Tis the proud one cut off in his daring !

'Tis the howl of the scorner brought low in his pride !
'Tis the moan of the prayerless by mercy denied,
'Tis the sting of that death which makes sorrow his
 slave,
'Tis the victory which darkness gains over the grave !

TRIO.

Sing ! Sing ! Rejoice and be glad,
Hope for the penitent, joy for the sad,
For the LORD hath looked down with a merciful eye,
And heard, in compassion, Jerusalem's cry,
He hath said that through FAITH shall redemption
 be found,
Though the sins of the seeker do greatly abound ;
Give heed to His precepts, abide His control,
And the death ye now dread shall be life to your
 soul.

CHORUS.—Sing to Jehovah, &c., &c.

SOLO—ARIA.

Grounded on St. Luke, Chapter i., verses 6 and 7.

In righteousness before their God,
The path of His commands they trod,
And blameless kept His holy way,
Whose precepts never lead astray.

With prayerful lip and praiseful song
They travelled life's sad course along,
Nor murmured yet at heaven's decree,
Though childless yet their lot might be.
When crowning mercy came at last,
And sorrow's pang was all o'ercast.
What joy so pure on earth below
As that heaven's chosen servants know?

SOLO—THE SONG OF ZACHARIAS.

Founded on St. Luke, Chapter i., verses 68 to 74.

For ever blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
His Name for ever be adored that loveth man so well,
That steppeth from His throne on high a human path to
trace,
And brought salvation from the sky to save a sinful
race.
Salvation's horn 'Thou dost uphold 'Thy servants' eyes
among,
According as 'Thy prophets told while yet the world was
young,
That we from those who love us not might surely
saved be,
In token of the covenant our fathers held from Thee—

That Thou wouldst to their race proclaim a blessed
deliverance near,
When all who laud Thy holy Name may worship without
fear,
In lowliness and righteousness a tribute prayer to sing
Of man's regenerate thankfulness to Heaven's eternal
King !

CHORALE—ST. JOHN'S PRAYER.

Lord of the earth, Lord of the sky, Thou that endurest
eternally,
Spurn not my prayer, scorn not my cry, Thou that
endurest eternally ;
Less than the least on earth that dwell,
Grant me the grace Thy power to tell,
Lord of the earth ! Lord of the sky ! Thou that
endurest eternally !

Soon shall the world Thy brightness see, Thou that
endurest eternally,
Deign but one ray, O Lord ! to me, Thou that endurest
eternally,
Teach me the path Thy feet shall trace,
That I may kiss each holy place,
Lord of the earth, Lord of the sky, Thou that
endurest eternally.

CANTATA—THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST.

Where Jordan's sacred waters glide A form of beauty
stood ;
The seal of Heaven was on His brow—A mortal, yet
a GOD ;
Beneath His feet those waters ran, Their tribute kiss
to pay,
Then went, unlike regardless man, Rejoicing on their
way.

Nor yet alone by Jordan's flood, That form of light and
beauty stood,
For one was nigh who, long ere then, Had shunned the
dark abodes of men,
And tarried by that waterside, His SAVIOUR's coming
to abide.
He came ! the high and mighty ONE, The Lord of
mercy came,
And proved, beneath the hand of JOHN, That sacra-
mental stream
Which flows e'en yet, and aye shall flow, Till earth's
remotest day
Heaven's pledge that MAN, like it, shall go Rejoicing on
his way.

CANZONET.

'Tis not in wealth nor worldly power, 'tis not in wisdom's
boastful hour,
'Tis not in youth's celestial voice, to bid the Christian's
soul rejoice.

Riches on Earth are tears in Heaven,
Power but enslaves where'er 'tis given,
Wisdom in man is folly's test,
Youth but a fleeting charm at best.

Faith in a Saviour's boundless love is wealth below, and
power above,
Whilst treacherous wisdom, vain as fair, ends but like
youth in age and care.

FINAL CHORUS.

There is a home beyond the sky wherein the happy
dwell,
A region of eternal joy more bless'd than tongue may
tell,
'Tis not, like mansions of the rich, bedecked with gold
or gem,
Its raiment likens not to such as wear Earth's diadem ;

Its triumphs are not of the proud, its raptures of the
vain,

Nor do its plaudits ring aloud a boastful trumpet
strain ;

Its joys are peace, the Spirit's thrall in fullest mercy
given,

The peace of God which passeth all, the happiness of
Heaven !

There is a wealth stored up on high more beautiful than
gold,

A gem that shames the ruby's dye, whose worth no lips
may tell,

Whose living symbol spanned the Earth when Noe's
prayer was heard,

And Nature at her second birth proclaimed th' Almighty's
word.

That wealth is ours, a SAVIOUR's love, that gem of ruby-
light,

The great atonement from above, which shows man's
future bright,

Ours be the privilege of faith which lifts the soul on
high,

And opens through the gates of death a mansion in
the sky.

There is a treasure still of Earth which e'en the poor
can know,

HUMILITY, of angel birth, most high, while yet most
low,

Nor kingly power nor lordly might possess it at
command, -

The weak man hath as strong a right as any in the
land.

And which is he, though held in scorn, whom Heaven
shall call above,

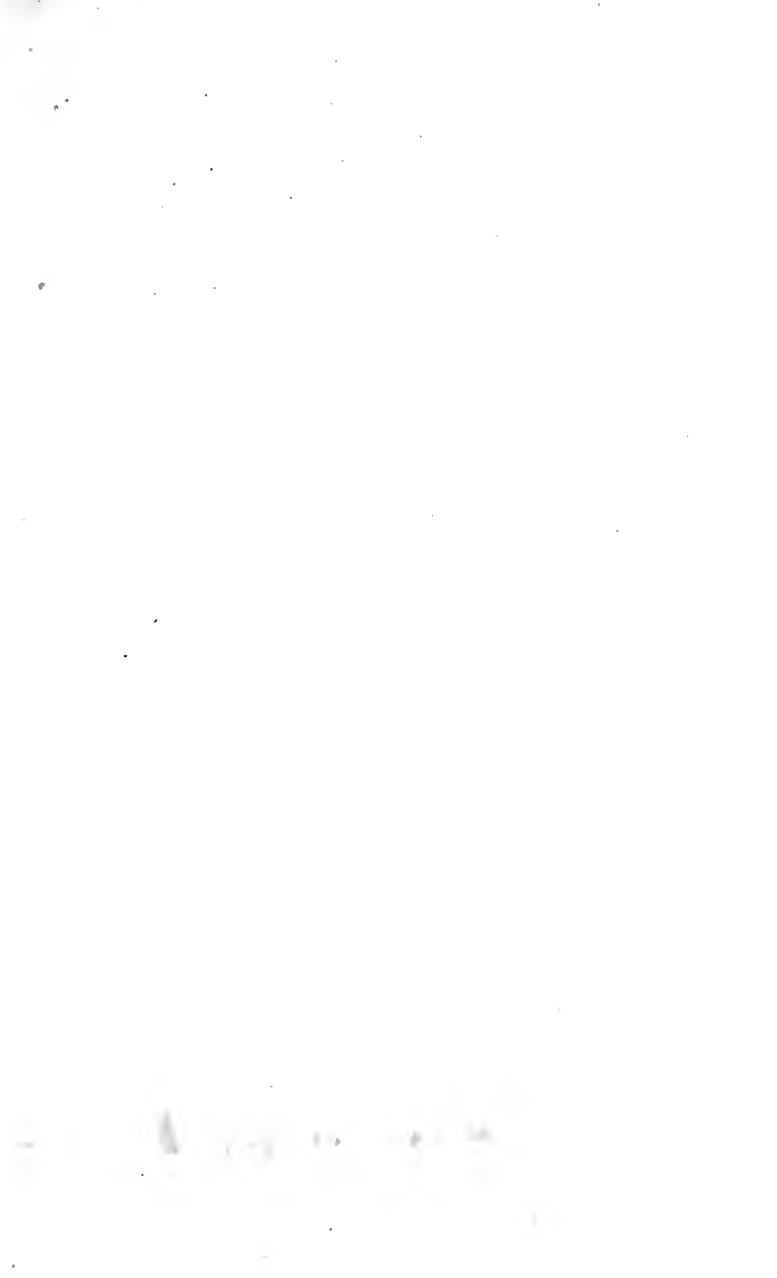
Too meek of heart or lowly born for God's eternal
love?

Go hence, ye rich in mammon's store, if lacking this ye
sigh,

Your recompense is here below, not upward in the sky !



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